



# Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (D. 1333) *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*

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**Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period:  
The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333)  
*Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab***

**Abstract**

This dissertation explores the emergence of a golden age of Arabic encyclopaedic literature in the scholarly centers of Egypt and Syria during the Mamluk Empire (1250-1517). At the heart of the project is a study of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* ('The Ultimate Ambition in the Branches of Erudition'), a 31-volume encyclopaedic work composed at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and divided into five parts: (i) heaven and earth; (ii) the human being; (iii) animals; (iv) plants; and (v) the history of the world.

My study examines the formal arrangement, thematic contents, and codicological features of this seminal work, arguing that the rise of encyclopaedism in this period was emblematic of a certain intellectual ethos, a systematic approach to the classification of knowledge which emerged in the discursive context of a rapidly centralizing imperial state. I argue that the *Nihāya* grew out of an amalgam of several genres (including the *adab* anthology, the cosmographical compendium, the chancery scribe manual, the dynastic chronicle, and the commonplace book), developing into a new form and serving a different purpose from its literary predecessors. Such texts, long considered tokens of intellectual and cultural decadence, demonstrate the strategies used by Mamluk religious scholars, chancery scribes, and *littérateurs* to navigate an ever-growing corpus of accumulated knowledge.

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How does one thank one's family? The *Nihāya*'s chapter on the expression of gratitude (§2.3.1.10) does not contain a rhetorical formula that is up to this challenge. For their unstinting love and support, I thank my parents, brothers, and sister, who, despite the thousands of miles that have separated us for so many years, have always been with me. On this side of the world, the Jacksons have treated me like a member of their family since long before I became one. Finally, my deepest gratitude is to my wife Jennifer and our darling daughters Laila and Maya. For everything.

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## **Abbreviations, Transliteration, and Dates**

*Nihāya* = Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, eds. Aḥmad Zakī Pāsha et al (Cairo: al-Mu’assasa al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li-‘l-Ta’līf wa-‘l-Tarjama wa-‘l-Ṭibā’a wa-‘l-Nashr, 1923-97).

DKI = Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition of the *Nihāya*, viz. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Mufīd Qumayḥa et al (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004).

References to books (*funūn*), sections (*aqsām*), and chapters (*abwāb*) in the *Nihāya* are signaled using the symbol (§). For example, §1.2.3 refers to book 1, section 2, chapter 3. See Appendix A for the *Nihāya*’s Table of Contents.

EI1 = M. Th. Houtsma et al, eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1908-34).

EI2 = H. A. R. Gibb et al, eds. *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1954-2009).

EI3 = Marc Garborieau et al, eds. *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three* (Leiden: Brill, 2007-).

Q = al-Qur’ān

AH = After *hijra*. Death dates are given according to both *hijrī* and common era (CE) calendars. All other dates are CE except when quoting from primary sources.

Arabic quotations are transliterated in cases where vocabulary or syntax is noteworthy. Words that have romanized English acceptations (e.g. madrasa, imam, Abbasid, Mamluk) are not italicized or transliterated with macrons or underdots.

For my parents

## INTRODUCTION

Sometime around the year 1314, a clerk living in Cairo grew weary of his day-to-day responsibilities in the Mamluk imperial government's financial bureaus, and decided to immerse himself in a project of intellectual and literary edification. This project took the form of an encyclopaedic compendium of knowledge entitled *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* ('The Ultimate Ambition in the Branches of Erudition'), which occupied its author—one Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī—until the end of his life in 1333. Containing over 2.3 million words and spanning 31 manuscript volumes, the *Nihāya* was a work of enormous scope, arranged into five principal divisions: (i) the cosmos, comprising the earth, the heavens, the stars, the meteorological phenomena, etc.; (ii) the human being, containing material on hundreds of subjects including physiology, genealogy, poetry, women, music, wine, amusements and pastimes, political rule, and chancery affairs, to name but a few; (iii) the animal world; (iv) the plant world; and (v) a universal history, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing all the way through the events of al-Nuwayrī's life. Perusing the pages of the *Nihāya*, one comes across such varied topics as: the substance of clouds; the innate dispositions of the inhabitants of different climes; poetry about every part of the human body; descriptions of scores of animals, birds, flowers and trees; qualities and characteristics of good rulers and their advisors; administrative minutiae concerning promissory notes, joint partnerships, commercial enterprises, loans, gifts, donations, charity, transfers of property, and much, much more. A remarkably rich document, the *Nihāya* is a window onto the social, economic, and intellectual landscapes of a medieval Islamic society.

Why did al-Nuwayrī compose this work? What disciplines and discourses did it encompass, and who was its intended audience? What was the institutional context of its composition and what generic paradigms did it build upon? These are the principal questions of this dissertation. Through an examination of the formal arrangement and thematic contents of this text, my study sheds light on a tradition of Arabic encyclopaedism—of which the *Nihāya* was one of the most ambitious exemplars—that witnessed its fullest flowering in the Mamluk Empire (1250-1517). Al-Nuwayrī’s sources, his methods of cross-referencing and synthesis, and the internal architecture of the work reveal much about the navigation and transmission of an ever-growing corpus of accumulated knowledge in the form of large compilatory texts. Furthermore, the reconstruction of al-Nuwayrī’s social and professional environment on the basis of his own testimony as well as that of his contemporaries, provides a glimpse into the habitus of the Mamluk civilian elite, an educated class of religious scholars, government bureaucrats, and litterateurs who were the main producers and consumers of this literature.

By virtue of its sheer size and multi-faceted character, al-Nuwayrī’s compendium has been exploited by readers in different ways over the course of its history. The manuscript record shows that it was copied for several centuries after al-Nuwayrī’s death; other compilers such as al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) quoted liberally from it and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) used it as a source for his own history.<sup>1</sup> In the West, the *Nihāya* became known as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when several manuscripts

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<sup>1</sup> On al-Qalqashandī’s dependence on al-Nuwayrī, see Chapter 1. For Ibn Khaldūn’s debt to the *Nihāya*, see Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā’ūn* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1970), 96.

were deposited at Leiden.<sup>2</sup> Krachkovskiĭ reports that the text attracted considerable interest in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for its accounts of pre-Islamic history; as older sources became available to orientalists, however, the *Nihāya* was deemed to be of “secondary importance.”<sup>3</sup> The first complete edition of the text was begun in Egypt in 1923 by Aḥmad Zakī Pāsha and completed in the 1960s, but its final volumes were only published in 1997.<sup>4</sup> In more recent times, the *Nihāya* has been drawn upon mainly by historians of the Mamluk Empire because of al-Nuwayrī’s extensive treatment of the events of his own lifetime. With very few exceptions (notably, the studies by Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Nadwī, and Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi), the work has been approached instrumentally, as a source for other scholarly projects rather than an object of inquiry in and of itself.

My interest in the *Nihāya* has been motivated from the outset by a curiosity about why this time and place in Islamic history witnessed an explosion of compilatory texts: dictionaries, manuals, onomastica, anthologies, and compendia of all shapes and sizes. Many of these texts have been seen as tokens of intellectual stultification and a lack of originality—the baroque sputterings of a civilization that had long since lost its creative spark. The notion, however, that someone would dedicate many years of his life to writing a 9,000-page book because he was “unoriginal” struck me as strange

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<sup>2</sup> Barthélemy d’Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale, ou, Dictionnaire universel : contenant généralement tout ce qui regarde la connoissance des peuples de l’Orient* (Maestricht: J.E. Dufour & Ph. Roux, 1776), 670. See also the notice in Appendix C of this study about the following manuscript: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (§1.1.1–§5.4.3), manuscript (Leiden: Leiden University, MS Or. 273), 1145pp, undated but before 1073/1665.

<sup>3</sup> I. Krachkovskiĭ, “al-Nuwayrī,” *EI*.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B.

indeed, perhaps the result of a lack of imagination among modern, rather than medieval, scholars. This perspective seems to derive from an approach to Islamic history that places an inordinate emphasis on origins (what Thomas Bauer has termed “Frühzeitversessenheit”) at the expense of a historical tradition’s later re-readings and re-formulations of its literary and intellectual patrimony.<sup>5</sup> There is little room in such a worldview for a text like al-Nuwayrī’s, which is, like virtually all encyclopaedic works, a concatenation and synthesis of earlier authoritative materials. To regard such works as worthy of study in their own right rather than quarries to be mined for historical and literary data depends upon an understanding of compilatory texts as palimpsests of the processes of canon-formation, reflections of the complexities and challenges of navigating a hegemonic literary-intellectual tradition.

*Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period* makes four important scholarly contributions. First, it closely examines the phenomenon of large-scale compilation and encyclopaedism during the Mamluk period which has been almost entirely neglected in Western scholarship, despite being productive of many of the works (chronicles, dictionaries, anthologies, etc.) that have served in many ways as primary custodians of the Islamic tradition. Second, it presents a detailed reconstruction of the life and career of a Mamluk intellectual and compiler, shedding light on the dynamics of his professional environment and the tools available to him in assembling his massive compilation. Thirdly, it demonstrates through a close reading of the *Nihāya* the ways in which al-Nuwayrī worked with hundreds of authoritative sources to produce

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Bauer, “Die Leiden eines ägyptischen Müllers: Die Mühlen-Maqāme des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār (st. 749/1348),” in *Ägypten-Münster : kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zu Ägypten, dem Vorderen Orient und verwandten Gebieten: donum natalicium viro doctissimo Erharto Graefe*, edited by Anke Ilona Blöbaum, Jochem Kahl, and Simon D. Schweitzer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 2.

an accessible synthesis that was amenable to different modes of consultative and traditional reading. Finally, this dissertation offers a historicized conceptualization of the all-important category of *adab*, showing how its post-Mongol manifestations differed significantly from the “classical” works by Ibn Qutayba, al-Jāḥiẓ, and others, during the first few centuries of Islam.

## Chapter Overview

My first chapter (“Approaching Mamluk Encyclopaedism”) begins by elaborating an approach to Mamluk encyclopaedic literature that poses different questions of Arabic compilatory texts than have traditionally been posed. I begin by examining the genealogy of the encyclopaedia in an effort to assess its suitability as a methodological tool, while also exploring the possibility of excavating an indigenous notion of encyclopaedism from the period in question. Part of the difficulty of working with the *Nihāya* is its thematic heterogeneity: modern historians (and many medieval readers) refer to it as a chronicle (*tārīkh*); literary scholars define it as an oversized *adab* work; scholars who work on medieval administration breezily assume that it is a comprehensive scribal manual. Everyone agrees that it is some sort of encyclopaedia, and yet very few have traced the implications of this generic identification. If the *Nihāya* is an encyclopaedia, what does that mean? Given that an encyclopaedic range of works have been referred to as encyclopaedias—from Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* to Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, to the recently discontinued *Britannica* and its illustrious replacement, Wikipedia—it scarcely needs to be pointed out that the use of this term in defining a text like al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāya* raises more questions than it answers. In this



chapter, I attempt to address these questions and in so doing, argue for an approach to Mamluk compilatory literature that begins with actors' categories—the nomenclature used by authors to define their own intellectual projects—but is not held prisoner by them. The capaciousness of encyclopaedism as an analytic category helps mitigate the literalism imposed by reading our authors' self-definitions too closely.

In Chapter 2 (“An Encyclopaedist at Work: al-Nuwayrī’s Intellectual and Institutional Milieus”), I present a study of al-Nuwayrī and his world based on his own testimonies and those of his medieval biographers. Here, I am indebted to the scholarship of Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn, who painstakingly excavated much of al-Nuwayrī’s biographical information from the *Nihāya* in her 1984 monograph.<sup>6</sup> I build on Jamāl al-Dīn’s work by examining in greater depth the institutional structures that formed the backdrop to al-Nuwayrī’s career. This period witnessed the wide proliferation of madrasas and other educational establishments, where scholars were employed as professors in multiple fields and supported by funds from charitable trusts. This facilitated a surge in the production and circulation of books, produced by a growing class of learned scribes, jurists, and administrative officials. In his capacity as a high-ranking clerk in a rapidly consolidating imperial state, al-Nuwayrī is an example of an individual at the epicenter: he was well-positioned to experience first-hand the processes of administrative-financial, political-territorial, scholarly-educational, and textual centralization that greatly impacted the intellectual culture of his time. I argue that it was in this increasingly centralized and institutionalized milieu that al-

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<sup>6</sup> Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab: maṣādiruhu ‘l-adabiyya wa-arā’uhu ‘l-naqdiyya* (Cairo: Dār Thābit, 1984).

Nuwayrī's book was written, an environment in which both professional and amateur scholars were engaged in a project of negotiating the canons of various disciplines, conserving and systematizing the tremendous wealth of knowledge and literature that had accumulated over several centuries while also finding ways to renew, contest, and surpass it. To ignore this dimension of Mamluk intellectual culture is to approach the period's literature with little understanding of the cultural archive with which poets and theologians, rhetoricians and philosophers, lexicographers and anthologists were in constant dialogue.

In Chapter 3 ("The Shape of the *Nihāya*) I present a bird's eye view of al-Nuwayrī's work: its internal arrangement, structural divisions, and overall composition. I show, through a discussion of his methods of cross-referencing, that al-Nuwayrī was a tremendously fastidious and self-conscious compiler who had a clear sense of the conceptual boundaries of his work and the ways in which its materials related to each other. The *Nihāya*'s hierarchical arrangement sets it apart from the *adab* tradition with which it is often connected (exemplified by such texts as Ibn Qutayba's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi's *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*), raising questions about why al-Nuwayrī himself insisted that his work belonged to this tradition. Finally, I present—using the method of chapter word counts—a tool to parse the contents of this text, which is highly modular and eschews excursus. The combination of all these structural features, I argue, enables us to read a clear synthetic vision and epistemological outlook into al-Nuwayrī's choices of what materials to include and exclude.

This vision and outlook are explored in Chapter 4 ("Cosmography, Anthology, Chronicle, Commonplace Book: The *Nihāya*'s Sources and Compositional Models"). I

begin by considering al-Nuwayrī's stated reasons for composing his work, which are expressed in deeply personal terms; the *Nihāya* is portrayed as a kind of commonplace book, a tool for self-edification and enrichment. On the other hand, the work is peppered with suggestions that its contents may prove valuable to scribes, litterateurs, rulers, and their advisors, which returns us to the question of audience treated earlier in the dissertation. Further complicating the issue of the *Nihāya*'s self-definition is the compositional model upon which it is based, which I argue is rooted in the cosmographical tradition of the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. One text in particular, al-Waṭwāṭ's (d. 716/1316) *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ibar* is critically important to the *Nihāya*; I demonstrate the ways in which al-Nuwayrī draws upon, edits, supplements, and subtracts from this work in composing his cosmographical, zoological, and botanical divisions. After a discussion of al-Nuwayrī's principal sources besides al-Waṭwāṭ's text, I conclude by discussing the "epistemological ecumenism" of the *Nihāya*: the ways in which al-Nuwayrī manages diverse and often contradictory truth claims, and genres of intellectual and literary production that present different epistemological worldviews.

The dissertation concludes with three appendices. Appendix A presents a translation of the *Nihāya*'s complete table of contents as it is presented by al-Nuwayrī in the master preface to the work. Appendix B presents word counts for each of the *Nihāya*'s chapters, alongside an index to the two editions of the work. Appendix C contains notes on and images of several manuscripts of the *Nihāya*, including four presumed autographs. It also contains a discussion of a copy of al-Bukhārī's *al-Jāmi' al-*

Ṣaḥīḥ, which seems to have been copied by al-Nuwayrī during the period in which he was composing the *Nihāya*.

## CHAPTER 1

### APPROACHING MAMLUK ENCYCLOPAEDISM

The Mamluk period in Egypt and Syria has often been described as a golden age of Arabic encyclopaedic literature. It witnessed the writing of large-scale compendia by such figures as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333),<sup>7</sup> Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī (d. 749/1349),<sup>8</sup> and Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418),<sup>9</sup> whose works are vast, multi-themed collections spanning thousands of pages and containing material from a wide range of disciplines, from history and geography to cosmology, botany, ethics, and zoology. In addition to the behemoths of this encyclopaedic “triumvirate,” the Mamluk period was also replete with a variety of other more modestly-proportioned but no less omnivorous works, to say nothing of the many compendious manuals, handbooks, and dictionaries for which the period is justly famous.

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<sup>7</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, eds. Aḥmad Zakī Pāsha et al (Cairo: al-Mu’assasa al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li-‘l-Ta’līf wa-‘l-Tarjama wa-‘l-ṭibā’a wa-‘l-Nashr, 1923-97). Hereafter, *Nihāya*. See also idem, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥīd Qumayḥa et al (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004). Hereafter, DK1.

<sup>8</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1924) covers only the first volume. A complete edition was published in 2001 but is of uneven quality; see idem, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Sarīḥī (Abu Dhabi: al-Majma’ al-Thaqafī, 2001). For a facsimile of manuscripts in Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Süleymaniye Umumî Kütüphanesi, the British Library, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, see idem, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt: Ma’had Ta’rīkh al-‘Ulūm al-‘Arabiyya wa-‘l-Islāmiyya fī iṭār Jāmi’at Frankfurt, 1988-2001).

<sup>9</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Khidīwiyya, 1913-22, repr. 1964). The index to this edition was published several decades later: Muḥammad Qandīl Baqlī, *Fahāris Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1972).

Encyclopaedism is a subject that has long attracted and repelled the efforts to define it by scholars working in various literary and intellectual traditions. Texts referred to as encyclopaedic span multiple disciplines and literary genres, and exhibit considerable diversity of structure, contents, sources, and utility. As one scholar has noted, the application of the term “encyclopaedic” to texts that bear little resemblance to archetypal reference works like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has become increasingly widespread among critics, who have traced an encyclopaedic impulse through works as diverse as the Bible, Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and Pound’s *Cantos*.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, a great deal of ink has been spilled in the service of the contrary impulse, to settle upon a precise definition of the encyclopaedia so as to avoid the vague associations that result from wielding the term in too loose a fashion.

My interest in this chapter is to reflect upon the question of how to approach the phenomenon of encyclopaedism in the Mamluk context. Despite growing interest in pre-modern Islamic compilatory literature, theoretical frameworks for the analysis of these forms have only begun to be elaborated.<sup>11</sup> In a sense, the task at hand requires

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<sup>10</sup> Hilary Clark, “Encyclopedic Discourse,” *SubStance*, vol. 21, issue 67 (1992), 95.

<sup>11</sup> Tarif al-Samman, “Arabische Enzyklopädie und Bibliographie,” in *Die Arabische Welt und Europa: Ausstellung der Handschriften- und Inkunabelsammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, 20. Mai - 16. Oktober 1988*, eds. Tarif al-Samman and Otto Mazal (Graz: ADEVA, 1988), 219-24; see the articles by Hilary Kilpatrick, Geert Jan van Gelder, Maaïke van Berkel, and Ulrich Marzolph in Peter Binkley, ed., *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts: Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Stephanie B. Thomas, “The Concept of *Muḥāḍara* in the *Adab* Anthology with special reference to al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī’s *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’*.” PhD diss, Harvard University, 2000; Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, “Arabisch-islamische Enzyklopädien: Formen und Funktionen,” in *Die Enzyklopädie im Wandel vom Hockmittelalter bis zur frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Christel Meier (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2002), 43-83; Paul L. Heck, *The Construction of Knowledge in Islamic Civilization: Qudāma b. Ja’far and his Kitāb al-kharāj wa-ṣinā’at al-kitāba* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs: Compilation and the Author’s Craft in Abū ’l-Faraj al-Isfahānī’s Kitāb al-Aghānī* (London: Routledge, 2003); Thomas

attending to several deceptively simple questions. What exactly is meant by the term “encyclopaedia” in the study of Mamluk literature? Does it presuppose the existence of a true genre, or rather a set of compositional features shared by different texts and intellectual traditions? In either case, what are its distinguishing traits and what sets it apart from earlier varieties of encyclopaedic writing in the Arabic-Islamic tradition?

Addressing these questions requires saying something about the broader genealogy of the encyclopaedia. I have found that other historical contexts and textual traditions provide a rich source of interpretive strategies for situating the present subject. To this end, I begin by tracing certain contours of the scholarly engagement with Late Antique, Medieval European, and Renaissance encyclopaedism, as well as the encyclopaedic production of earlier Islamic (mainly Abbasid) figures, before returning to the questions posed above.

### **Reading the Medieval Encyclopaedia: Definitions & Approaches**

While the history of encyclopaedic writing in the medieval European tradition has been well charted from its origins in Isidore de Seville’s seventh-century *Etymologiae* to the massive thirteenth-century *Speculum Maius* of Vincent de Beauvais and beyond, the history of medieval Islamic encyclopaedism remains relatively obscure. In a 1966 article

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Bauer, “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit,” *Die Mamluken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg, 2003), 71–122; Dagmar A. Riedel, “Searching for the Islamic Episteme: The Status of Historical Information in Medieval Middle-Eastern Anthological Writing,” PhD diss., Indiana University, 2004; Y. Tzvi Langermann, “Ibn Kammūna and the ‘New Wisdom’ of the Thirteenth Century” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, vol. 15 (2005): 277–327; Gerhard Endress, ed., *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Bilal Orfali, “The Art of Anthology: al-Tha‘ālibī and his *Yatīmat al-dahr*,” PhD diss., Yale University, 2009.

about encyclopaedias in the Arab world, the French scholar Charles Pellat claimed that, to his knowledge, no such surveys had ever been written on the subject.<sup>12</sup> In fact, Pellat had been scooped over a hundred years earlier by the Austrian orientalist Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, who produced an initial survey of encyclopaedias written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, drawn from various bibliographical sources.<sup>13</sup> The range of works in Hammer-Purgstall's list was expansive, cutting across generic and disciplinary boundaries, but consisted primarily of classifications of the sciences such as al-Fārābī's (d. 339/950) *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* ('Enumeration of the Sciences'), and technical treatises on disciplinary terminology such as Abū Bakr al-Khwārizmī's (d. 387/997-98) *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm* ('Keys to the Sciences').

By contrast, the conception of Arabic encyclopaedism elaborated by Charles Pellat one century later was firmly rooted in the world of *adab* (belles-lettres and other edifying literature) and the writings of its greatest practitioners, figures such as al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940), and al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956). Surveying Arabic literary history from its beginnings through its 19<sup>th</sup> century "renaissance," Pellat sketched the outlines of an Arabic encyclopaedic canon. He included works of a broadly compilatory character, such as the literary anthologies of Abū Manṣūr al-Tha'ālibī (d. 429/1038) and Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 711/1311) famous dictionary

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Pellat, "Les Encyclopédies dans le Monde Arabe," *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale* 9 (1966): 631-58; see 631, fn. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, "Über die Encyklopädie der Araber, Perser und Türken," *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Classe* Bd. 7, pp. 205-32; Bd. 8, pp. 106-22; Bd. 9, 1-44 (Wien, 1856-59). Hammer-Purgstall's sources included Ḥājjī Khalīfa's *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa 'l-funūn* (Flügel edition), Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, Mikhā'il al-Ghazīrī's (Casiri) *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, and various other manuscript catalogues.



*Lisān al-‘Arab* (‘The Arab Tongue’), but he was careful to distinguish them from what he deemed to be full-fledged encyclopaedias, the greatest exemplar of which was the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (‘Epistles of the Sincere Brethren’), an esoteric compendium of the sciences written by an anonymous brotherhood in the tenth century.

Two decades later, Hilary Kilpatrick attempted to define what Pellat had regarded as the most overtly encyclopaedic genre in Arabic literary history, namely the *adab* compendium, “that baggy monster of the medieval Arab writers.”<sup>14</sup> Noting that “an appalling amount of descriptive and analytical work remains to be done if the medieval *adab* works are to make sense as literature and not merely as a source of ... cultural and social history,” Kilpatrick suggested that the enormous trove of *adab* texts should be sub-divided into genres, based on their form, subject-matter, and purpose. The *adab* encyclopaedia was one such genre, which she defined as “a work designed to provide the basic knowledge in those domains with which the average cultured man may be expected to be acquainted... characterized by organization into chapters or books on the different subjects treated.”<sup>15</sup>

This category mapped only partially onto the larger encyclopaedic canon proposed by Pellat. It included such works as Ibn Qutayba’s *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* (‘The Choicest of Reports’) and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s *al-‘Iqd al-farīd* (‘The Unique Necklace’), but also certain works that were more strictly “literary” such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s (d. 463/1070) *Bahjat al-majālis wa-uns al-mujālis wa-shaḥḍh al-dhāhin wa-l-hājis* (‘The Beauty

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<sup>14</sup> Hilary Kilpatrick, “A Genre in Classical Arabic Literature: The *adab* Encyclopedia,” in *Proceedings, Union européenne des arabisants et islamisants : 10th Congress, Edinburgh, 9-16 September 1980*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Edinburgh, 1982), 34.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

of Literary Gatherings and the Intimacy of the Litterateur and the Sharpening of the Idea and the Notion'), al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's (fl. 409/1018) *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā' wa-l-bulaghā'* ('Apt Quotables of the Literati and Conversations of Poets and Eloquent Men'), al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 538/1144) *Rabī' al-abrār wa-nuṣūṣ al-akhbār* ('Springtime of the Pious and the Texts of Reports'), raising the question of what set apart the *adab* encyclopaedia from the literary anthology.<sup>16</sup> Of the Mamluk triumvirate, only al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab* is considered by Kilpatrick to be an *adab* encyclopaedia, while al-Qalqashandī's work is a "borderline case", and al-ʿUmārī's is not mentioned at all.

The differences in Hammer-Purgstall, Pellat, and Kilpatrick's treatments stem, in part, from the nebulous character of the phenomenon under investigation. The term "encyclopaedia" is notoriously capacious, and has been used in different ways throughout its history, even within the European tradition from which it derives. Of relatively recent vintage, the word first appeared in Latin in the late fifteenth century, coined by scholars to designate an ideal of humanist education, an approach to learning that stressed the unity of all knowledge. Until the mid-twentieth century, historians, following the opinion of those who coined the term, believed that it derived from an ancient Greek word meaning the "circle of learning" (*enkuklopaideia*); it was later established that this word was a corruption of the Greek formulation *enkuklios paideia*, meaning "general knowledge" or "well-rounded education."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> On this question, see also Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, revised ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 252-253.

<sup>17</sup> See J. Henningsen, "Enzyklopädie. Zur Sprach- und Bedeutungsgeschichte eines pädagogischen Begriffs," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 10 (1966): 271-362; Franco Simone, "La notion d'Encyclopédie: Élément caractéristique de la Renaissance française," in *French*

The association of the term “encyclopaedia” with the features that define it in modern usage—multi-disciplinarity, comprehensiveness, and systematic organization—did not take place until the eighteenth century, with the publication of Ephraim Chambers’ *Cyclopaedia* in 1710 (the text that would serve as the inspiration for Diderot and d’Alembert’s great *Encyclopédie* in 1751). Between the date of its earliest appearance (ca. 1489) and the emergence of the modern encyclopaedic reference book, very few works called themselves “encyclopaedias,” and those that did were not references but rather texts that elucidated the relationships between different branches of knowledge,<sup>18</sup> much like the propaedeutical works surveyed by Hammer-Purgstall.

The mere fact that the word was not often used in book titles before the late 17<sup>th</sup> century has not prevented scholars from tracing a history of European encyclopaedism through the late classical and medieval periods, identifying works by such figures as Cassiodorus (ca. 490-585) and Isidore de Seville (ca. 600-636) as encyclopaedias *avant la lettre*, which aimed “to preserve what was useful from ancient learning for the training of monks and preachers... and to bring together and transmit an essential core of

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*Renaissance Studies 1540-1570: Humanism and the Encyclopedia*, ed. Peter Sharratt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 234-62; A. P. Bos, “Exoterikoi Logoi and Enkyklioi Logoi in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and the Origin of the Idea of the *Enkyklios Paideia*,” in *Cosmic and Meta-Cosmic Theology in Aristotle’s Lost Dialogues* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 113-173; Robert Fowler, “Encyclopaedias: Definitions and Theoretical Problems,” in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3-29; Richard Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-35.

<sup>18</sup> An exception was Johann Heinrich Alsted’s *Encyclopaedia* of 1630, a four-volume work of multidisciplinary scope which would have no direct imitators in the seventeenth century. See Ann Blair, “Revisiting Renaissance Encyclopedism,” in *Encyclopaedias and Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, eds. Jason König and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2012). See also Ann Blair, “A Europeanist’s Perspective,” in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 201-15.

knowledge.”<sup>19</sup> Several centuries later, Europe witnessed a second wave of encyclopaedism in the production of famous works like Vincent de Beauvais’s (d. ca. 1264) *Speculum maius* and the *De proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomaeus Anglicus (d. 1272). Taken together, these texts would come to be regarded as constituting a medieval encyclopaedic canon prefiguring the modern genre, the anachronistic designation having long been accepted by many historians as a matter of convenience.

The use of this anachronistic designation, however, has not failed to pose methodological and interpretive problems for the study of texts as chronologically, linguistically, structurally, and materially disparate as Martianus Capella’s *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, James le Palmer’s *Omne Bonum*, and Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (to say nothing of non-Western texts like Wang Qi’s *Sancai tuhui* and al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*). In a seminal essay exploring the encyclopaedic efflorescence of the thirteenth century, the French medievalist Jacques Le Goff wondered whether historians should continue to employ an ambiguous Renaissance category in studying the history of medieval European encyclopaedism, or should rather attempt to determine the equivalents from the period in question, assuming they existed.<sup>20</sup> The problem, in other words, is not merely one of terminological precision, but rather a question of hermeneutics: how to interpret these works and the intentions of their compilers without depending upon modern categories and principles? Is it possible to speak of the medieval encyclopaedia as a true genre, with all of the self-consciousness

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<sup>19</sup> See Blair, “A Europeanist’s Perspective,” 203.

<sup>20</sup> J. le Goff, “Pourquoi le XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle a-t-il été plus particulièrement un siècle d’encyclopédisme?” in *L’enciclopedia medievale*, ed. M. Picone (Ravenna: Longo, 1994), 25.

of other medieval genres such as breviaries and books of hours? If so, then what were the distinguishing characteristics of this genre, and what were its names?

One of the few scholars to respond to Le Goff's challenge of excavating a medieval discourse on encyclopaedism was Bernard Ribémont, who suggested that the problem of locating encyclopaedism in the medieval period has two dimensions: the question of what criteria defined it, and the issue of whether the authors of texts conforming to those criteria were conscious of working within a particular, proto-encyclopaedic, genre.<sup>21</sup> His approach has involved comparing the properties of a range of medieval texts traditionally deemed by modern historians to be encyclopaedic in order to determine whether a common denominator could be found to fit them all. The result of Ribémont's comparison was an abstract "encyclopaedic model" in which all of these works participated to a greater or lesser degree:

[E]ach of these works offers a more or less complete book of Nature that provides a moral reading, generally assisting an investigation of the *sacra pagina*. Each uses the work of Isidore as a model and a source, as the many quotations from the *Etymologies* show. Each one of these texts includes, at varying levels, an almost philosophical reflection on the organization of the universe together with considerations on the liberal arts and/or the classification of the sciences. We find a wide set of constants: animals, stones, *mirabilia*, microcosm/macrocosm, etc. All of these texts are the fruit of compilation, as is often explained in the prologues..."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "Taking [Le Goff's] statement as a starting point, two fields of research present themselves. The first concerns the historico-generic problem of the definition of an encyclopaedic genre in the Middle Ages. In other words, is it possible to find—by a quasi-Aristotelian method—some criteria that will allow us to determine whether a text is or is not an encyclopaedia. The second field raises the following issue: to what extent were medieval encyclopaedists conscious of writing a text belonging to a definite genre? If they were, the historian has to try to determine—in terms of their methodology, conceptions, etc.—what the set of constants followed by every author may have been." See Bernard Ribémont, "On the Definition of an Encyclopaedic Genre in the Middle Ages," in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 47.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

Turning to the question of generic self-consciousness, Ribémont determined on the basis of a survey of prefatory comments that, in the absence of the word “encyclopaedia,” the works’ compilers “employ a set of equivalent terms and syntagmata, giving a definition of their writing, and furthermore, of the genre: *summa brevis, compilare, compilatio, compendium*.”<sup>23</sup> He concluded, therefore, that one could speak of a self-conscious encyclopaedic genre before the Renaissance, as its authors “possessed a real consciousness of their purpose in writing,” and their texts shared common structural and thematic features.<sup>24</sup>

Ribémont’s work combines elements of two fundamental approaches to the study of medieval encyclopaedism. The first (what we might term “analytic”) begins by assuming an *a priori* definition of the term “encyclopaedia,” and then applying it to texts that fit the definition regardless of their contemporary classification.<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>24</sup> “We find here a lexical field with terms like *mores, edificatio, evigilatio, vivere in Domino*, etc.” (Ibid., 55.) For an approach similar to Ribémont’s see Clark, “Encyclopedic Discourse.” Clark has studied the tropes used by writers to characterize the retrieval and organization of knowledge—such as the mirror, the tree, the labyrinth, the circle, and (later on) the network—throughout history and across various literary genres.

<sup>25</sup> Christel Meier, for example, has argued that the study of the pre-modern encyclopaedia need not be fraught by so much terminological anxiety, given that it is an unambiguous genre, a book of universal knowledge that arranges information in a systematic way in order to serve a useful purpose. See idem, “Organisation of Knowledge and Encyclopaedic *Ordo*: Functions and Purposes of a Universal Literary Genre,” in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 112. This approach leads Meier to distinguish eight types of medieval western encyclopaedias written between the ninth and sixteenth centuries, according to their function: political, school, monastic, preachers’, medical, economic, university, and domestic. Along similar lines, Ann Blair has studied the composition of large-scale works designed to solve the problem of too much information during the early modern period—“books...from new genres like the universal bibliography and the book review to new (or not-so-new) contributions to well-established genres, including the florilegium, the dictionary, and the encyclopedic compilation.” She refers to these aids to learning as “reference genres,” an appellation which, while being no less

second (let's call it "empirical") begins at the level of the text itself and elucidates the medieval nomenclature with which its author identifies his project. Crudely speaking, the analytic method is top-down and the empirical is bottom-up. Every scholarly analysis of a pre-modern encyclopaedic text depends in some way on one of these approaches.<sup>26</sup>

Each method has its benefits and limitations. Studying this phenomenon in its own terms admits historical fidelity to one's reading, but makes it vulnerable to a potentially myopic literalism, oblivious to the fluidity between different types of works and intellectual currents. Meanwhile, an analytic approach enables the study of encyclopaedism as an abstract feature of different kinds of texts (regardless of what they call themselves), but simultaneously bring us back to the pesky question of definition: what essential elements define the encyclopaedia *qua* analytic category? Are there any interpretive dilemmas raised by relying upon an *ex post facto* construction, and if so, how might they be mitigated?

These methodological questions represent a necessary entry into the topic at hand. If problems of definition and generic classification are present in the European

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analytic or anachronistic than the term "encyclopaedia," at least has the virtue of occupying a narrower semantic field. See Ann Blair, "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64:1 (January 2003): 11-28; idem, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 117-21, 168-72.

<sup>26</sup> A pure empirical approach such as the one that Le Goff envisioned eschews the term encyclopaedia altogether in favor of actors' categories. A pure analytic approach surveys literary texts from a bird's eye view, and privileges an abstract encyclopaedic model over the testimony of internal textual evidence. Ribémont's approach, as I will discuss below, is both empirical and analytic. It proceeds by selecting a certain group of works for empirical analysis on the basis of a certain unspoken definition of encyclopaedism. The Encyclopaedic Model that he constructs is confirmed by empirical analysis but conceived, in the first place, as an analytic concept.

discourse on encyclopaedism, we would expect that they should be compounded upon entering a different intellectual tradition altogether. Indeed, one would be justified in wondering what utility the term “encyclopaedia” has for the analysis of texts in Arabic (or, for that matter, Chinese, Persian, or Malay) when its status as a stable category in European literature before the mid-eighteenth century is tenuous. Just how translatable is the notion of an encyclopaedia, if one is unsure of what it means in the first place?

### **In Search of Arabic Encyclopaedism**

As in the medieval European context, there is no straightforward equivalent for the term “encyclopaedia” in classical Arabic literature. The terms *dā'irat al-ma'ārif* and *mawsū'a*, which are used in modern parlance, did not emerge until the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, texts that may appear encyclopaedic to our eyes were often undifferentiated by medieval readers from decidedly un-encyclopaedic works, as illustrated by Hammer-Purgstall's lengthy 19<sup>th</sup>-century survey. In many cases, Hammer-Purgstall seems to have included a text based solely on the presence of the word *ilm* or *ulūm* (knowledge, sciences) in its title, such as Ibn Abī Khaythama's (d. 279/892) *Kitāb al-ilm* ('The Book of Knowledge,' a work of *ḥadīth*), or al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) masterpiece, *Iḥyā' ulūm al-dīn* ('Revival of the Religious Sciences').

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<sup>27</sup> See Charles Pellat, “Mawsū'a,” *EI2*: “In the sense of “a work dealing with all the sciences and arts”, the idea of an encyclopaedia was not expressed in Classical Arabic, and it was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the expression “*dā'irat al-ma'ārif*” circle of items of knowledge“ was coined, corresponding approximately to the etymological meaning of the word current in Western languages, and not until the 20<sup>th</sup> that a neologism, *mawsū'a*, emerged, which contains an idea of breadth, of wide coverage, etc.”



Meanwhile, of the three major compendia most commonly associated with Mamluk encyclopaedism, only al-Nuwayrī's is included.

Book titles are, of course, an inexact index of contemporary classification; one must also consider the testimony of other generic signposts such as bibliographical works, prefatory remarks, biographical dictionaries, classifications of the sciences, and the presence of a professional base, which often exerted a strong centripetal force upon the disciplinary self-awareness of works composed by its members.<sup>28</sup> To take an example: while the terms *qāmūs* and *mu'jam* are used interchangeably today to refer to Arabic dictionaries, their medieval antecedents displayed a multiplicity of titles.<sup>29</sup> The status of lexicography, however, as a self-conscious scholarly discipline with its roots in the earliest history of Islamic civilization is unambiguous. The subject was taught for centuries alongside other topics such as grammar and prosody, and the author of a dictionary was regularly identified by his biographers as a lexicographer (*lughawī*).<sup>30</sup>

No such professional categories or labels seem to have existed for the author of an encyclopaedic text, who was generally identified as a master of the discipline in

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<sup>28</sup> This phenomenon is not unique to medieval Islam. Ann Blair argues that “the great instability and diversity of contemporary classifications of books and of knowledge in the late Renaissance makes discussion of disciplinary or generic categories delicate—all the more so in natural philosophy which lacked a clear professional base.” See Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 46.

<sup>29</sup> See J. A. Haywood, “*Qāmūs*,” *EI2*; idem, *Arabic Lexicography: Its History, and its Place in the General History of Lexicography* (Leiden: Brill, 1960).

<sup>30</sup> Classical bibliographical dictionaries devoted exclusively to grammarians and lexicographers include Abū Bakr al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwīyīn wa-l-lughawīyīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1973); Abū ʿl-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib al-naḥwiyyīn* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr, 1974); Abū Saʿīd al-Sīrāfī, *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn al-baṣriyyīn* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Kāthūlīkiyya, 1936); Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt ʿalā anbāh al-nuḥāt* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1950-73); al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wuʿāt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawīyyīn wa-l-nuḥāt* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat ʿIsā ʿl-Bābī ʿl-Ḥalabī, 1964); al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Yaghmurī, *Kitāb Nūr al-qabas al-mukhtaṣar min al-Muqtabas fī akhbār al-nuḥāt wa-l-udabāʾ wa-l-shuʿarāʾ wa-l-ʿulamāʾ* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1964).

which his work was primarily rooted, or (more typically) of multiple disciplines. Al-Nuwayrī, al-‘Umarī, and al-Qalqashandī are cases in point: their works situate themselves within three different textual traditions: *adab* (belles-lettres), *masālik wa-mamālik* (geography), and *inshā’* (epistolography), respectively, even though each overflows with material unrelated to its stated focus.<sup>31</sup> Prefaces and authorial interventions confirm the deliberateness of these generic affiliations: al-‘Umarī states that he compiled his *Masālik al-abṣār* as a corrective to outdated works about geography;<sup>32</sup> al-Qalqashandī identifies other scribal manuals as the inspiration for his own *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*; and al-Nuwayrī tirelessly insists that his compendium is a work of *adab*, perhaps anticipating that later readers would refer to the work as a historical chronicle.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, even though al-‘Umarī and al-Qalqashandī were aware of al-Nuwayrī’s work—al-Qalqashandī cites the *Nihāya* at least eight times in the course of his *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā* and almost certainly drew upon it regularly without direct citation—neither of these two authors claimed to be following in al-Nuwayrī’s footsteps.<sup>34</sup> And while al-Qalqashandī pays homage to al-‘Umarī in the preface to the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*, it is

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<sup>31</sup> Note that these classifications are displayed prominently within the title of each work: *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*; *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*; and *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fī ṣinā‘at al-inshā’*. Also note that each of these three classifications encompasses much more than the translations suggest, as discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1924), 2.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Nuwayrī’s biographers are discussed in Chapter 2; the composition and contents of the *Nihāya* are treated in Chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> See al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*, 1:48; 3:360, 456, 479; 4:35; 6:235, 329, 384. See also Amīna Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab: maṣādiruhu ‘l-adabiyya wa-arā’uhu ‘l-naqdiyya* (Cairo: Dār Thābit, 1984), 114-16.

the latter's secretarial manual (*al-Ta'rif bi-l-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*) and not the encyclopaedic *Masālik al-abṣār* that is claimed as an inspiration.<sup>35</sup>

The absence of a common set of equivalent terms and actors' categories uniting these three texts has not prevented literary scholars from lumping them together as "scribal encyclopaedias," a vague designation based on certain broad similarities between the works rather than a close familiarity with their individual contents and structure. This is in keeping with the prevalent approach towards encyclopaedism among medievalists in the Arabic tradition who (like their Europeanist counterparts), have mostly conceived of this phenomenon analytically, formulating their own implicit or explicit definition of what constitutes an encyclopaedia, then grouping works from diverse contexts under its rubric. We have already considered the approach of Charles Pellat, who associated encyclopaedism primarily with the anthologizing impulses of *adab*, and Hilary Kilpatrick, who elaborated a vision of the *adab*-encyclopaedia as a text embodying a certain kind of knowledge for a cultured individual. Ulrich Marzolph also makes use of this category of the *adab*-encyclopaedia in his discussion of al-Ibshīh's 15<sup>th</sup>-century compendium, *al-Mustaṭraf fi kull fann mustaṭraf* ("The most appreciated topics from every subject regarded as elegant"), and characterizes it as "a literary product summing up previous knowledge in a period of cultural decline."<sup>36</sup> Others have applied the term to a rather different set of philosophical and scientific texts, which are often propaedeutic in nature. While acknowledging the "theoretical minefield

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 1:7.

<sup>36</sup> Ulrich Marzolph, "Medieval Knowledge in Modern Reading: A Fifteenth-Century Arabic Encyclopaedia of *Omni Re Scibili*," in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 408.

surrounding discussions of encyclopaedism,” Tzvi Langermann has proposed that the encyclopaedia *qua* literary genre nonetheless “offers the best avenue towards historical contextualization” in the Arabic-Islamic world.<sup>37</sup> His definition is more general than Kilpatrick’s, making no mention of how (and by whom) such texts were intended to be used:

For the purposes of the present discussion an encyclopedia is a literary composition that aims to convey in coherent and unified fashion knowledge that is developed within related but distinct disciplines. I deliberately exclude from this definition manuscript codices whose contents comprise a wide expanse of subject matter, in the form of treatises written by a number of different authors... It is the challenge to select, formulate, and organize the items of knowledge that interests us here; all the more so, when the same author experiments with different formats.<sup>38</sup>

Most of the works that Langermann considers in his analysis of 13<sup>th</sup> century encyclopaedic texts are philosophical collections devoted to the “foreign sciences”—logic, natural philosophy, mathematics—works that are significantly different in content and structure from the Mamluk compendia discussed earlier. While multi-disciplinary in nature, the topical range of their contents is relatively limited in comparison to the immense thematic sweep in the works of al-Nuwayrī, al-‘Umarī, and al-Qalqashandī.<sup>39</sup> Langermann’s criterion that these texts present knowledge from “related but distinct disciplines” permits the inclusion of works that remain, on the whole, rather specialized technical treatises.

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<sup>37</sup> Langermann, “Ibn Kammūna,” 278.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>39</sup> Note that Langermann includes al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāya* as an example of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century encyclopaedic text. While its author was born in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, he did not begin work on the *Nihāya* until the following century.

Similarly, Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt has associated encyclopaedism mainly with philosophical and scientific texts by figures such as Ibn Farighūn, al-Kindī, Ibn Sīna, Ibn Rushd, and al-Khwārizmī. These texts, which in the estimation of a different scholar might be called “classifications of the sciences,” also lack the comprehensiveness that we associate with universal encyclopaedias like the *Britannica* and the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the criterion of “classification of knowledge”—which is, for Biesterfeldt, the “leading principle” of encyclopaedism—is not limited to the works that he studies but extends beyond them to a vast array of texts, relatively few of which we might label at first glance as encyclopaedias.

A much more systematic approach to the question of what defines medieval Arabic-Islamic encyclopaedias is found in the work of Syrinx von Hees, who in a recent article presented a detailed model composed of nine criteria:

- (i) “An encyclopaedia is an organized compendium of knowledge. The aim of its author is to present knowledge in accordance with its own systematics.” (ii) “The author of an encyclopaedia wants to present serious, but concise knowledge in manageable brevity.” (iii) “The aim of an encyclopaedia is essentially didactic. The author wants to educate.” (iv) “The author of an encyclopaedia wants to make specialized knowledge verified by authorities and contemporaries accessible to his public. Such specialized knowledge is usually difficult to access and to comprehend by a general public.” (v) “The author of an encyclopaedia seeks to make his book as user-friendly as possible. To facilitate the use of his book, the author can include one or more of the following: a detailed table of contents, a clearly marked hierarchical structure, numerical or alphabetical lists, introductions, summaries, glossaries, or cross-references.” (vi) “In order to help the reader in visualizing the condensed basic knowledge, the author of an encyclopaedia uses examples, narrations, and illustrations.” (vii) “In order to convince the readership of the credibility of the offered basic knowledge, it is important for the author of an encyclopaedia to stress his faithfulness in dealing with his sources and his commitment to tradition.” (viii)

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<sup>40</sup> See Wolfhart Heinrichs, “The Classification of the Sciences and the Consolidation of Philology in Classical Islam,” in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, edited by Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 119–39.

“The encyclopaedia is meant to aid the general cultural memory.” (ix) “The purpose of writing...encyclopaedias was to guide the reader through the study of nature to the knowledge of God.”<sup>41</sup>

Von Hees’s broader aim in the course of developing this formula is to argue that al-Qazwīnī’s (d. 682/1283) *‘Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt* is a “full-fledged encyclopaedia” and not a mere cosmographical text as it has previously been described. As carefully elaborated as her definition is, however, she does not include (unlike Langermann) any mention of multi-disciplinarity as a necessary quality of an encyclopaedia, presumably because such a criterion might exclude al-Qazwīnī’s work from the category. Instead, she proposes “the study of nature” as the fundamental preoccupation of an encyclopaedia, a quality that the *‘Ajā’ib* clearly possesses, but which many other Mamluk-era texts traditionally deemed “encyclopaedic” do not.

What should be apparent from this brief survey of different analytic treatments of encyclopaedism is how significantly capacious the category can be. This is both the primary strength and weakness of the analytic approach. On the one hand, construing the encyclopaedia as a work defined by certain compositional features—such as exhaustiveness, multi-disciplinarity, and systematic organization—represents a way to subsume texts from various genres and time periods under a single rubric. On the other hand, the freedom that comes from establishing one’s own parameters (rather than basing an analysis on actors’ categories) means that the category quickly grows unwieldy. Along these lines, Josef van Ess has asked:

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<sup>41</sup> Syrinx von Hees, “Al-Qazwīnī’s *‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt*: an encyclopaedia of natural history?” in *Organizing knowledge: Encyclopaedic activities in the pre-eighteenth century Islamic world*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 171–86.

Is Ṣafaḍī's *Wāfi bil-wafayāt* an encyclopaedia or merely an extremely “comprehensive” biographical dictionary? Is ‘Abd al-Jabbār's *Mughnī* a Mu‘tazilī encyclopaedia or simply a *summa theologica*? Is Qudāma b. Ja‘far's *K. al-Kharāj wa-ṣinā‘at al-kātib* rightly called an encyclopaedia by Paul Heck in his Ph.D. thesis, or is it simply a manual? [...] I do not want to say that speaking of “encyclopaedias” in these cases is totally wrong. Nobody can prevent us from using the word in a looser and less determined way. But what we need is a definition.<sup>42</sup>

Definitional difficulties, I would suggest, are only half the problem. There is a second interpretive dilemma lurking beneath any analytic approach to the study of encyclopaedism, namely that it risks glossing over essential differences between texts that are grouped together in an abstract fashion. Recall that the three major Mamluk works that we have briefly touched upon—the compendia of al-Nuwayrī, al-‘Umarī, and al-Qalqashandī—precisely do not situate themselves within a common disciplinary tradition, let alone a self-conscious genre that corresponds unequivocally to our modern notion of the encyclopaedia. Do we not risk flattening our subject by subordinating the statements of these medieval authors to our own generic categories? Or is it safe to assume that their projects were one and the same—an argument whose progress is smoothed by the homogenizing label of “encyclopaedia”?

### The Instability of Actors' Categories

If an analytic approach is methodologically problematic for the reasons discussed above, the alternative—a strict adherence to empiricism, whereby actors' categories are

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<sup>42</sup> Josef van Ess, “Encyclopaedic Activities in the Islamic World: A Few Questions, and No Answers,” in *Organizing knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 6–7. The problem with establishing a definition of the encyclopaedia and applying it to medieval texts, however, is that it only serves to tell us what works fit our definition of encyclopaedism, which is the central blind spot of the analytic approach.

treated as hermetic vessels—threatens to distort our subject in other ways. A quick scan of al-Nuwayrī’s table of contents brings home the realization that accepting the *Nihāya*’s self-classification as a work of *adab* causes many more interpretive problems than it solves, given the breadth of material included and its structural divergences from the classical paradigm (as I discuss in Chapter 3). Although *adab* has long been associated with an “encyclopaedic aspect,” it too is of limited value in explaining this work’s particularities.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, Maaïke van Berkel has argued that al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*, while strictly belonging to the scribal genre exemplified by Ibn Qutayba’s *Adab al-kātib*, is much more than a simple expansion of earlier models. She suggests that al-Qalqashandī aimed to surpass the genre’s administrative focus “by integrating lengthy geographical, zoological, historical and cosmological entries...[placing] his work in the tradition of the encyclopedic masterpieces of his day.”<sup>44</sup> Al-‘Umarī’s work, too, while ostensibly belonging to a long and distinguished geographical tradition, incorporates so many extrinsic elements that one wonders what value there is in depending on its internal nomenclature. In a way, therefore, what these works suggest to us is that even

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<sup>43</sup> See Pellat, “Mawsū‘a”: “Indeed, secular *ma‘ārif* as opposed to *‘ulūm* of a religious nature, nourished the literary genre designated *adab*, which branched out and became conducive to the moral, cultural and professional formation of the Muslims and consequently presupposed the bringing together of a mass of different notions. The definition of *adab*, which consists of “taking a little of everything” (*al-akhdh min kulli shay‘in bi-ṭaraf*), may mean that, in the traditional and speculative sciences (*‘ulūm naqliyya wa-‘aqliyya*) developed since the beginnings of Islam, one proceeded to a choice which assumed, by force of circumstances, an encyclopaedic aspect and was given shape in works which bear witness to the level of the average culture and the tastes of the public to whom they were addressed.”

<sup>44</sup> Maaïke van Berkel, “Al-Qalqashandī,” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography II: 1350-1850*, eds. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 337-38. See also idem, “The Attitude Towards Knowledge in Mamlūk Egypt: Organization and Structure of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā* by al-Qalqashandī (1355-1418),” in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997).



indigenous genres and actors' categories such as *adab*, *masālik wa-mamālik*, and *inshā'* cannot escape the definitional instabilities that we encounter in analytic concepts like the "encyclopaedia". If anything, they invite us to reconsider the solidity of generic conventions, and to wonder whether these categories function analytically in and of themselves.<sup>45</sup>

The most obvious problem, though, with the empirical approach is that it tends to miss the forest for the trees. Consider, for example, that the *Nihāya*, the *Masālik*, and the *Ṣubḥ* were composed within a single century of one other, by authors with similar intellectual backgrounds and professional occupations. They lived in the same cities and circulated in the same networks of scholarly and political patronage.<sup>46</sup> Their texts bear certain qualities—e.g., vast thematic scope, systematic organization, diversity of source materials, elephantine proportions, etc.—that bind them to each other while differentiating them from their own generic traditions. Furthermore, the historical moment at which they were composed witnessed an explosion of other large-scale

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<sup>45</sup> One may further argue that the empirical approach is undermined by the problematic nature of the concept of "genre" in pre-modern Arabic literature. See Gregor Schoeler, "Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft* 123 (1973): 9-55; Geert Jan van Gelder, "Some Brave Attempts at Generic Classification in Premodern Arabic Literature," in *Aspects of Genre and Type in Pre-Modern Literary Cultures*, eds. Bert Roest and Herman Vanstiphout (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 15-31; Beatrice Gruendler, "Motif vs. Genre: Reflections on the *Diwān al-Ma'ānī* of Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī," in *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre*, eds. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2005), 57-85.

<sup>46</sup> On the similar professional backgrounds of these three authors, see Régis Blachère, "Quelques réflexions sur les formes de l'encyclopédisme en Egypte et en Syrie du VIIIe/XIVe siècle à la fin du IXe/XVe siècle," *Bulletin des études orientales* 23 (1970): 7-19. The fact, in particular, that all three members of the Mamluk encyclopaedic triumvirate were successful scribes in the state bureaucracy is of central importance to Blachère's reading of their works, noting that their training was oriented towards fulfilling the highly technical duties of their offices. These were not court dandies or pie-in-the-sky intellectuals, but rather high-level employees answerable to heads of state. Their works are thus viewed as a response to the exigencies of their office, and as aides to the aspiring scribe.

compilatory texts which aimed to provide a similarly comprehensive treatment of various classical Arabic disciplines. In the face of all this circumstantial evidence for the existence of some kind of unified literary movement, should scholars choose to privilege text over context?

### **A Middle Path**

I propose that there is no escaping the methodological problems raised by both the empirical and analytic approaches to this subject. The most reasonable way to study such texts, in my view, is to combine elements of each approach. Making sense of the compilatory literature of the Mamluk period depends on an empirical understanding of the heterogeneous vocabularies and intellectual traditions that underpin it, but also an analytic ability to identify commonalities and trends that cut across generic boundaries. From a practical perspective, this means that a text such as al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāya* should ideally be read on its own terms, and also *against* these terms. We must take its self-classifications and authorial statements seriously, while also tracing their full implications. In what ways does this book actually fit the same generic model as the paradigmatic *adab* works from which it claims descent? How do we explain the *Nihāya*'s significant divergences from this paradigm in content, arrangement, and self-conception, and what was at stake for al-Nuwayrī to situate his book in the tradition that he did? From an empirical perspective, actors' categories are paramount, but as we have seen, a thorough-going empiricism also calls into question the constancy of these categories and foregrounds their historical contingency. Thus weakened, they invite

the bolstering cement of analytic concepts (such as the “encyclopaedia,” “reference work,” “manual,” “commonplace book,” etc.) to help define the textual field before us.<sup>47</sup>

Approaching the *Nihāya* both empirically and analytically is to accept the salience of the term “encyclopaedism” to Mamluk literature, but to use it mainly as a corral within which we might examine the diverse menagerie of multidisciplinary texts composed during this period. The white-washing tendencies of this term can be kept in check by a sensitivity to generic signals and indigenous nomenclature (e.g. *adab*, *ma‘ārif*, *masālik wa-mamālik*, *inshā’*, *tārīkh*, etc.), while the harsh literalism of an empirical reading is best mitigated by encyclopaedism’s soft focus. Throughout this dissertation, I do my best to use words like “encyclopaedia” and “encyclopaedism” in a deliberate and qualified manner. There is no doubt that, as H. Munro once put it, “a little inaccuracy sometimes saves tons of explanation.”<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, when these terms begin to become a liability for my analysis, actors’ categories are drawn upon to sharpen the field of view once again.

### Why Encyclopaedism?

Thus far, this chapter has mainly been occupied with questions of presence, absence, and interpretation: Is there such a thing as a medieval Arabic encyclopaedia? What do

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<sup>47</sup> See Ribémont, “On the Definition of an Encyclopaedic Genre in the Middle Ages”: “On this basis it is possible to give an abstract model which could serve as a basis for the study of medieval encyclopaedias... This model arises from an analytic and synthetic process: if medieval encyclopaedism truly exists, then it corresponds to a model; if this model can be applied to a corpus of texts, then this corpus is in fact composed of encyclopaedias. In other words, the *encyclopaedic model* is not closed, and the confrontation between the basic model and the texts implies that there will be modulations.” (53)

<sup>48</sup> H. Munro, *The Square Egg and Other Sketches, with Three Plays* (New York: Viking Press, 1929), “Clovis on the Alleged Romance of Business,” 136.

we mean by this word? How did these texts classify themselves? An issue we have yet to address is why encyclopaedism should be a salient topic in the first place. In other words, what about encyclopaedism *qua* “Platonic category” warrants scholarly interest, and why should it be a relevant lens through which to view different types of textual forms and modes of composition?<sup>49</sup>

This issue has not received much attention from scholars of classical Arabic literature, largely because the Mamluk period has long suffered under the shadow of a critical consensus unsympathetic to its modes of poetic expression, and relatively dismissive of its culture of scholarly commentaries, literary anthologies, and voluminous encyclopaedias. This consensus derives partly from the persistence of a “Romantic criterion of artistic originality” among literary scholars, but more significantly from a long-standing approach to Islamic history which regards the several centuries following the Mongol conquests as an age of decadence and decline.<sup>50</sup> As Edward Elbridge Salisbury put it in an 1843 essay on classical Arabic literature:

Among the causes of the decline of poetry after the dethronement of the Khalîfs of Bagdâd, were the foreign and barbarous extraction of the princes of the empire, whose literary standard, so far as they had taste sufficient to recognize any, was at variance with the native genius, and the slavish reiteration of the thoughts and imagery of earlier poets, consequent upon the dying down of genial fancy. A corrupt taste favored quibbling refinements of expression, the artifices of alliteration, and a forced appearance of novelty...When the Khalîfs of Bagdâd were dethroned, and the Tartar nations had begun their inroads, the bloom of all Arabic literature passed away; the creative period was at an end. Literary activity confined itself almost entirely to rhetorical criticism, compendium-writing and commentary.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Fowler, “Encyclopaedias: Definitions and Theoretical Problems,” 22.

<sup>50</sup> Riedel, “Islamic Episteme,” 20.

<sup>51</sup> Edward Elbridge Salisbury, *An inaugural discourse on Arabic and Sanskrit literature*, New Haven, Aug. 16, 1843 (New Haven: B. L. Hamlen, 1843), 29-30.

A similar view has been expressed by many an august scholar of classical Arabic literature.<sup>52</sup> Reynold Nicholson suggested, based on an admittedly “very desultory and imperfect acquaintance” with the poets of the Mamluk age, that while “it would be premature to assert that none of them rises above mediocrity... [it appears] that the best among them are merely elegant and accomplished artists, playing brilliantly with words and phrases, but doing little else.”<sup>53</sup> Ignaz Goldziher argued that Arabic-Islamic civilization, beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century bore the “infallible marks of decadence since the abundant and extensive literary production could boast very few innovating creative works...”<sup>54</sup> Hamilton Gibb drew a connection between political emasculation and literary production: “the output was enormous throughout, but the qualities of originality, virility, and imagination, weak from the first, die away completely by the sixteenth century,”<sup>55</sup> and Gaston Wiet helpfully provides a catalogue of terms used to

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<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting that there are important exceptions. See, for example, André Miquel, *La littérature arabe* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 84-95; R. Blachère, “Quelques réflexions sur les formes de l'encyclopédisme”. Furthermore, the decline theory has not been espoused solely by Western Orientalists but also by several generations of Arab scholars.

<sup>53</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 448.

<sup>54</sup> “The Mongol invasion and devastation meant an irretrievable loss and decline for Arabic science and literature... Accordingly, the general character of Arabic literature also underwent a radical change. There were few evidences of creative science. It is true that great scholars were active in all the fields, yet they undertook more collecting and compiling work, rather than independent research work. All over the period extending from the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century encyclopaedists came more and more into the foreground...” Ignaz Goldziher, *A Short History of Classical Arabic Literature*, translated, rev. and enl. by J. Desomogyi (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 141-42.

<sup>55</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 142.

describe the intellectual production of this period: stagnation, decadence, decline, twilight, sclerosis, penumbra, etc.<sup>56</sup>

Even Charles Pellat, whose 1966 study was the first to take stock of the conceptual dimension of Arabic encyclopaedism over an extended period, had the unfortunate habit of ascribing literary trends to certain civilizational features and peculiarities of the Arab temperament. He argues, for example, that the Arabs are pointillistic and incapable of synthesis. The fact that they wrote encyclopaedias by the dozen is no wonder, as the crushing yoke of religiosity favored erudition over imagination.<sup>57</sup> For Pellat, in the final analysis, while the earliest expressions of Arabic encyclopaedism during the Abbasid period were worthy of praise and admiration, later encyclopaedic texts could only be read as a symptom of the decline of Arab-Islamic civilization. As he argued in his article about Arabic encyclopaedias for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, while works such as al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā* demonstrate that “in spite of the reversals experienced by the Islamic world, Arabic culture had lost nothing of its richness in books...it had exhausted itself since the already distant age of its great prosperity and it was scarcely able to make any more obvious progress.”<sup>58</sup> Seen in this light, the question of why encyclopaedism should be a topic of interest for

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<sup>56</sup> “On peut épiloguer sur les termes à employer pour caractériser le phénomène d’une certaine stagnation depuis la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu’au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup>. On le qualifie de pénurie intellectuelle, de décadence, de déclin, de crépuscule, de sclérose; on a aussi parlé d’obscurcissement ou de sommeil... [Il] faut bien admettre qu’au cours de la période que nous venons de limiter, la littérature arabe est demeurée dans une sorte de pénombre...” Gaston Wiet, *Introduction à la Littérature Arabe* (Paris: Éditions G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1966), 243. See also Francesco Gabrieli, *Storia della letteratura araba* (Milan: Academia, 1951), 255-76, a chapter on the period stretching from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, simply titled “La Decadenza.”

<sup>57</sup> Pellat, “Les Encyclopédies dans le Monde Arabe,” 656-58.

<sup>58</sup> Pellat, “Mawsūʿa,” *EI2*.

Arabists is rendered moot: encyclopaedism is inherently *not* interesting precisely because it is a token of intellectual decline. As Nicholson put it in his seminal *A Literary History of the Arabs*: “To dwell...on the literature of this period would only be to emphasize its scholastic and unoriginal character.”<sup>59</sup>

In recent years, the study of Mamluk literature has begun to experience a profound reorientation, with several scholars challenging the old commonplaces and advancing our knowledge of important figures from this period.<sup>60</sup> Thomas Bauer has astutely demonstrated that the downfall of the “declinist” paradigm lies in its deep ahistoricity, a failure to situate literary texts against the backdrop of their cultural environments, instead examining them through a critical lens shaped by the values and standards of earlier centuries.<sup>61</sup> However, while the received view about the decadence

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<sup>59</sup> Nicholson, *Literary History*, 455. Nicholson granted, however, that certain authors such as al-Nuwayrī were at least worth “a passing mention”.

<sup>60</sup> See Roger Allen and D.S. Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk literature: Misunderstandings and new approaches,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 9:2 (2005): 105-32; idem, “In search of ‘Post-Classical Literature’: A review article,” *Mamluk Studies Review*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2007): 137-67; idem, “Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686-768/1287-1366): Life and Works; Part I: The Life of Ibn Nubātah,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 12.1 (2008): 1-35; Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart, eds. *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350-1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009); Syrinx von Hees, Thomas Bauer, and Abdul Rahim Abu-Husayn, *Inhitat: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, forthcoming 2013); Everett Rowson, “An Alexandrian Age in Fourteenth-Century Damascus: Twin Commentaries on Two Celebrated Arabic Epistles,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 7 (2003), 97-110; idem, “Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamluk Literature: al-Safadi's *Law'at al-shaki* and Ibn Daniyal's *al-Mutayyam*,” in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, eds. J. W. Wright, Jr. and Everett K. Rowson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 158-191; Li Guo, *The Performing Arts in Medieval Islam: Shadow play and popular poetry in Ibn Daniyal's Mamluk Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); idem, “Mamluk Historical *Rajaz* Poetry: Ibn Daniyal's Judge List and Its Later Adaptations,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 43-62; idem, “Self-mockery as a Genre in Mamluk Satiric Poetry: Ibn Daniyal on His Estranged Wife and Midlife Crisis,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32 (2006): 269-85; Th. Emil Homerin, “Reflections on Arabic Poetry in the Mamluk Age,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 63-85.

<sup>61</sup> Bauer, “In search of ‘post-classical literature’.”

of the post-Mongol period is beginning to be dismantled, an alternative vocabulary and hermeneutic framework has yet to replace it. What is needed is an approach that is sensitive to (rather than dismissive of) the complexities of navigating a hegemonic literary-intellectual patrimony, and attuned to the various forces at work: conservatism, systematization, revival and renewal, irony and meta-discourses. Such an approach would help account for such elements as the widespread intertextuality in Mamluk poetry, the subtle and unspoken negotiations with the canon of classical literature, and what Bauer has called “the *adabization* of the ‘*ulamā*’”: the increased involvement of religious scholars in “the profane culture of *adab*.”<sup>62</sup> Encyclopaedic texts represent a useful laboratory within which to test a variety of interpretive hermeneutics because they embody, to an overwhelming degree, many of the qualities and discursive modes of this period’s literature.

But the study of encyclopaedism is of interest to a larger community than the group of scholars interested in Mamluk literature. Deepening our knowledge of why and how learned individuals produced and consumed such works expands our understanding of a literary culture responsible for generating many of the chronicles, concordances, lexicons, and compendia that today’s scholars depend on in their study of medieval Islamic civilization.<sup>63</sup> Consider the challenges of pre-Ottoman research in

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas Bauer, “Anthologies,” *EI3*; idem, “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit,” in *Die Mamlūken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur. Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942-1999)*, eds. Stephen Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2003), 71-122.

<sup>63</sup> “Much of what we think of as distinctively Islamic was not really the product of some earlier and rather notional ‘Golden Age of Islam’, under the first four caliphs, or the ‘Abbāsids, or the Fātimids. Rather the shape of such things as the layout of Cairo, the structure and content of the Arabian Nights and the development of dervish orders are really the products of the Mamlūk age.” See Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamlūk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), introduction.



almost any sub-field of Islamic studies without depending on the works of: Ibn Khallikān (681/1282), Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311-12), al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1415), to name just a few of the hundreds of large-scale compilers who emerged from the socio-political matrix engendered by the scholarly institutions of the Mamluk Empire. Their works are palimpsests of the processes of canon formation, direct and indirect mediations of the corpus of Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual history. Just as lexicons presume to define the boundaries of a language, so do encyclopaedic texts map *omnis res scibilis*. Studying such figures and their works of encyclopaedic synthesis can be understood, if nothing else, as a means to historicize the most important sources and mediators of medieval Islamic civilization.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN ENCYCLOPAEDIST AT WORK:

#### AL-NUWAYRĪ'S INTELLECTUAL & INSTITUTIONAL MILIEUS

In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, an Egyptian bureaucrat withdrew from his duties in the imperial government of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, in order to spend the rest of his life writing an enormous compendium of knowledge. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī had never composed a book before. He was not an established poet or litterateur like some of his colleagues in the chancery, as his career in administration had largely been spent in financial bureaus. And notwithstanding the erudition on display in the pages of his work, al-Nuwayrī was not well-known as a scholar or teacher, despite having lived much of his adult life in a Cairene madrasa. At some point in the 1310s, however, he resolved to forgo his career in the upper echelons of the empire’s administrative elite, and spend the next decade and a half compiling his *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (‘The Ultimate Ambition in the Branches of Erudition’).<sup>64</sup>

In reconstructing the historical context for al-Nuwayrī’s life, what elements—social, intellectual, and material—are most salient to his decision to compose the *Nihāya*? This is the main preoccupation of this chapter. Did he aim to produce a manual for fellow scribes? Was he seized by a fear that the Mongol armies would soon ravage the colleges and libraries of the Mamluk Empire and lay waste to the intellectual heritage of Islam? Or was he an uninspired antiquarian living in a decadent age, with

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<sup>64</sup> I have translated *adab* here as “erudition” mainly to preserve the effect of the rhyming title, but also because al-Nuwayrī’s notion of *adab*, as we will see, is idiosyncratic and does not map easily onto either pre-Mamluk or modern acceptations of the term.

nothing original to contribute besides a potted collection of other people's work?

Evidence for a variety of motivations may be marshaled from such a voluminous text, but the subtle calculus underlying an author's decision to compose a particular book is never straightforward to ascertain. Beyond the immediate level of prefatory remarks and other authorial confidences, there are the circumstances of educational and professional experiences to ponder, the historical context, the cultural cachet attached to certain textual forms and genres of knowledge at this time, along with narrower questions of compositional models, access to sources, and intended readerships.

In this chapter, I argue that the relevant lens through which to view the *Nihāya* is not cultural preservation in the face of military threat, or the intellectual stultification of a "post-classical" age, or even scribal education, but rather the aggregative ethos of Mamluk imperial culture during the first third of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In his capacity as a high-ranking clerk in the administrative nervous system of the empire and a resident overseer of several important institutions, al-Nuwayrī was uniquely susceptible to the processes of centralization and consolidation that transformed the political and cultural life of his time. His work, like that of many other Mamluk compilers, reflects changes to the transmission and circulation of knowledge that resulted from these developments.

In untangling the motives underlying this work and seeking to understand its context, I have benefited from the pioneering scholarship of Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn, Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Nadwī and others, who have collectively

taught us much of what we already know about al-Nuwayrī and his *Nihāya*.<sup>65</sup> My ambition has been to supplement these treatments with a fuller picture of al-Nuwayrī's social and intellectual environment that draws upon recent investigations of the Mamluk period.<sup>66</sup> In doing so, I reflect on the ways that al-Nuwayrī's vita sheds light on broader issues such as the character of Islamic education under the Mamluks, the impact of institutionalization on scholarly culture, idealized images of the scribal class, and the vogue for encyclopaedic and other compilatory literature during this period.

### Intellectual Activity in the Wake of the Mongol Conquests

In Islamic history, the year 1258 looms large. In February, the armies of the Ilkhānids sacked the Abbasid capital at Baghdad, bringing an end to a dynasty that had reigned—through periods of glory and ignominy—for half a millennium. The ferocity of the

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<sup>65</sup> Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn extracted most of al-Nuwayrī's biographical information from the *Nihāya* with great precision in her 1984 doctoral study, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab: maṣādiruhu 'l-adabiyya wa-ārā'uhu 'l-naqdiyya* (Cairo: Dār Thābit, 1984). Other important treatments include: I. Krachkovskiĭ, "al-Nuwairi," *EI1*; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "An-Nuwayri (1279-1332): Encyclopédiste et chroniqueur de l'époque mamlūke," in *Les africains*, ed. Charles-André Julien (Paris: Les éditions du jaguar, 1978), vol. 10, 311-339; idem, "al-Nuwayrī," *EI2*; 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī fī kitābihi Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab : baḥth wa-dirāsa muqārana wa-naqd* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1987). Other specialized studies are cited below.

<sup>66</sup> It may have been feasible even a few decades ago to list the most important scholarly treatments of the Mamluk period in a single footnote, but that is thankfully no longer the case. In this chapter, I limit my citations to studies of the Baḥrī period (1250-1382), and particularly al-Nuwayrī's lifetime. For historical surveys covering the period of al-Nuwayrī's lifetime, the following texts provide useful context: Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamlūk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H. / 1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart F. Steiner, 1998); idem, "The Baḥrī Mamlūk Sultanate: 1250-1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 242-89; Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājji, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, 709-741/1309-41*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Kuwait: Kuwait University, 2000).

attack is the stuff of legend: hundreds of thousands were said to have been slaughtered, buildings razed to the ground, and the historic libraries of the city gutted and destroyed, making the waters of the Tigris run black with the ink of discarded books.<sup>67</sup> Following its victory at Baghdad, the Mongol army marched west where, two years later, it would be defeated decisively by the Mamluks at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt.

The explosion of encyclopaedic literature during the Mamluk period has been attributed by many cultural historians directly to a fear, among the scholarly elite, that all knowledge would be lost as a result of the invasions and the destruction of libraries.<sup>68</sup> The sense of terror that this catastrophe provoked is often raised as one of the principal factors leading to the composition of texts like al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāya*, which aimed to forestall the loss of an entire civilization’s intellectual heritage. Writing in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Charles Pellat argued that the invasion “certainly provoked serious disquiet which was translated into the composition of enormous encyclopaedias intended to some extent to preserve the acquisitions of preceding generations at the moment when the Arabo-Islamic world could be seen as despairing of achieving new progress and felt itself threatened by the worst calamities.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See Muṣṭafā al-Shak‘a, *Manāhij al-ta’līf ‘inda ‘l-‘ulamā’ al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1974), 732.

<sup>68</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa kitābuhu*, 98-101; al-Shak‘a, *Manāhij al-ta’līf*, 755; ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥamza, *al-Ḥaraka ‘l-fikriyya fī Miṣr fī ‘l-‘aṣrayn al-Ayyūbī wa-‘l-Mamlūkī ‘l-awwal* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1947), 315; Shawqī Dayf, *al-Fann wa-madhāhibuhu fī al-nathr al-‘arabī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1960), 379.

<sup>69</sup> Pellat, “Mawsū‘a,” *EI2*. More recently, at a conference on encyclopaedic activities in the pre-18<sup>th</sup> century Islamic world, Josef van Ess also raised the question of how encyclopaedism related to civilizational anxieties: “Did the scholars of the Mamluk period, of a period which has frequently been called the classical age for encyclopaedias in Islam...have the feeling that they were latecomers and that the achievements of earlier, more original and more creative centuries were about to get lost? Did they consider it their duty to save what could be saved,

One can understand the association of encyclopaedism with a cultural paranoia about the loss of ancient learning, given the existence of a similar discourse in the context of Renaissance encyclopaedism, but there is little evidence from contemporary sources that bears out this view.<sup>70</sup> Recent scholarship on the Mongol conquest of Baghdad has complicated the picture of a glorious cultural capital ravaged by alien marauders.<sup>71</sup> As Michael Cooperson has shown in an examination of literary reports about Baghdad and the various tropes that crystallized within them, the city seemed to have been a cultural backwater long before the Mongols sacked it.<sup>72</sup> The Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) visited Baghdad in 1184 and described it thus: “This ancient city, though it still serves as the Abbasid capital, has lost much of its distinctive character and retains only its famous name. Compared to what it once was—before it fell victim to recurrent misfortunes and repeated calamities—the city resembles a vanished encampment or a passing phantom.”<sup>73</sup>

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especially after Baghdad had been destroyed by the Mongols...?” See Josef van Ess, “Encyclopaedic Activities in the Islamic World,” 4.

<sup>70</sup> Blair, “Revisiting Renaissance Encyclopaedism.”

<sup>71</sup> See Peter Jackson, “World-conquest and local accommodation: threat and blandishment in Mongol diplomacy,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, eds. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 3-22; Thomas Haining, “The vicissitudes of Mongolian historiography in the twentieth century,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. Reuven Amitai-Press and David Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 332-46; David Morgan, “The Mongols and the eastern Mediterranean,” in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, eds. Benjamin Arbel et al. (London: F. Cass, 1989), pp. 198-211; idem, “The Mongols in Syria, 1260-1300,” in *Crusade and settlement: papers read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and presented to R.C. Smail*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 231-35.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Cooperson, “Baghdad in Rhetoric and Narrative,” *Muqarnas* (1996), pp. 99-113.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 99. The fact that Baghdad had fallen off of its perch does not mean that the conquests had no effect on the migration of scholars from other areas in the east. The question, however, is whether they uniformly went west. In some cases, scholars moved in both directions,

The question of whether or not the Mongols did pose a threat to the intellectual heritage of Islam is less relevant to the cultural preservationist argument than the question of whether the authors of Mamluk encyclopaedic texts *thought* that they did. How does one gauge the level of such anxiety? This question requires the examination of texts that are beyond the scope of this study, but it is worth pointing out for the time being that al-Nuwayrī himself does not evince any such anxiety in his discussion of the reasons behind his life's work, despite having participated in a military battle against the Mongols at Shaḡḡab in April 1303.<sup>74</sup> He also devotes an extensive 120-page “mini-monograph” to the subject of the Mongols in the historical section of the *Nihāya*, which provides a detailed record of the origin of the “Jinkizkhānid” state and the incursions of its successors into Islamic lands.<sup>75</sup> For al-Nuwayrī, the military threat had clearly not yet expired, but did not cause detectable concern about the loss of Muslim heritage, texts, or accumulated knowledge.

The actual effect of the conquests on intellectual activity during al-Nuwayrī's lifetime appears not to have been psychological but sociological. After the fall of

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escaping from the oncoming tide of the Mongol advance, and then ducking back behind it once the armies reached as far as Syria. The Baghdad-based philosopher Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284-85) was one such example; see Y. Tzvi Langermann, “Ibn Kammuna at Aleppo,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 17 (2007), 14. In other instances, the Mongols singled out the *‘ulamā’* as booty but then patronized them, as was the case of the astronomer al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), who built his famed observatory under the auspices of Hülegü at Marāgha, where a library was also built with the books carried off from the conquests of Iraq and Syria. See Devin DeWeese, “Cultural Transmission and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: Notes from the Biographical Dictionary of Ibn al-Fuwatī,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 11-29.

<sup>74</sup> *Nihāya*, 32:27-28 (DKI: 32:18).

<sup>75</sup> See *ibid.*, vol. 27. On al-Nuwayrī's discussion of the Mongols, see Reuven Amitai, “Al-Nuwayrī as a historian of the Mongols,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, edited by Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 23-36.

Baghdad, Cairo inherited its mantle as the political and cultural epicenter of the Muslim world. Scholars and poets emigrated from the eastern territories where bureaucratic and scholarly institutions had been thrown into upheaval by the invasions, and from the west—like Cairo’s most famous 14<sup>th</sup> century visitor, Ibn Khaldūn. Many of these immigrants found a new home in the colleges and libraries of the Mamluk realms, which became “a forum for the scholarly activities of the central Muslim world” inhabited by “an international community of Islamic literati bound together by a common language and educational background.”<sup>76</sup> Prior to this period, both Syria and Egypt had been relatively marginalized territories, but with the transfer of power came a transfer of culture.<sup>77</sup> In the preface to his *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fī šinā’at al-inshā*, al-Qalqashandī describes the Mamluk sultanate as the apogee of Egyptian and Islamic history, a state of political and cultural development representing a mature form of Islamic civilization comparable to the golden years of a man’s life:

The Egyptian territories and the Yūsufī kingdom—may God Almighty strengthen their defenses and multiply their grandeur—had dangled from the earrings of the Pleiades and surpassed all the other climes in their value.<sup>78</sup> The

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<sup>76</sup> Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 35.

<sup>77</sup> See Hend Gilli-Elewy, *Bagdad nach dem Sturz des Kalifats. Die Geschichte einer Provinz unter ilhanischer Herrschaft, (656-735/1258-1335)* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2000), 180-81; Jonathan P. Berkey, “Culture and Society during the Late Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 376-77; Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 128-38; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, “Les encyclopédies arabes de la fin du Moyen Age,” in *L'Encyclopédisme: Actes du Colloque de Caen, 12-16 Janvier 1987*, ed. Annie Becq (Paris: Éditions Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1991), 267-79; Blachère, “Quelques réflexions.”

<sup>78</sup> Al-Qalqashandī is referring here to the Egyptian kingdom of the Prophet Yūsuf, the Biblical Joseph. The “earrings of the Pleiades” was a popular metaphor for expressions of loftiness; see Paul Kunitzsch and Manfred Ullmann, *Die Plejaden in den Vergleichen der arabischen Dichtung* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: In Kommission bei Beck, 1992).



Prophet Muḥammad preached their conquest, and this was the greatest glad tiding. The master of the apostles declared that Egypt's inhabitants were both direct and indirect descendants [of Abraham], so the mighty among the Companions made for it in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and they explored its terrain, both rugged and flat. The hands of the Muslims seized it from the unbelievers, and they were more deserving of it and entitled to it. Then, its power continued to grow and its stature rose until it became the abode of the Abbasid caliph, and the base of the Islamic kingdom, and was honored to serve the two Holy Sanctuaries. Every king and nation served it because of its possession of Jerusalem and Mecca (*al-qiblatayn*).<sup>79</sup>

تَنَاهَتْ عَلَاءً وَالشَّبَابُ رِدَاؤُهَا      فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِالْفَضْلِ وَالرَّأْسُ أَشْيَبُ

*It achieved a high rank when youth was its garment  
So how great do you expect it to be now that its head is [crowned with] grey?*

The stability provided by a rapidly consolidating imperial state represented a fundamental break with several centuries of fractiousness and political turmoil in the central Islamic lands. Among the consequences of the new order was the emergence of an increasingly universal vision in much of the historical and geographical literature of the period, which began to regard its object of study as the Islamic world writ large, rather than a more narrowly defined region or time span.<sup>80</sup> This is borne out by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, who states in the preface of his encyclopaedic text *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* that he would not have been able to produce such a work had it not been for his position as a high-ranking secretary in the bureaucracy of a powerful

<sup>79</sup> al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 1:6 .

<sup>80</sup> As Zayde Antrim has shown in her study of place and belonging in medieval Syria, Mamluk geographers exhibited a "broader vision of place" than their antecedents, whose own writings reflected a preoccupation with more circumscribed territorial referents. Particularly in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which represented "the height of prosperity and stability in medieval Syria," Antrim argues that the region's inhabitants conceived of themselves "as belonging to and in an empire billed as Dar al-Islam [the Abode of Islam]." See eadem, "Place and Belonging in Medieval Syria, 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> centuries," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2005, 280-81, 328-43.

empire, which enabled him to meet travelers from all over the Islamic and Mediterranean worlds. As Zayde Antrim has argued, it was only through “the lens of empire [that he was] able to see and describe the diverse and distant lands, from India and Iran, to Mali and Ethiopia, to Morocco and Spain, that together constituted for al-‘Umarī the ‘realms of Islam’.”<sup>81</sup>

What was true for al-‘Umarī was also true in similar ways for his older contemporary al-Nuwayrī. The concentration within the Mamluk urban centers of scholars and literati from around the Muslim world had a formative influence on al-Nuwayrī’s life and career, and was paralleled by processes of centralization and consolidation in two other domains, namely the financial administration of the empire and the political unification of Egypt and Syria. These centralizing processes directly impacted the sociology of intellectual exchange during this period and are mirrored, I contend, by a fourth form of consolidation in the sphere of textual production.

### **Bureaucrat, Scholar, Compiler: Notes on al-Nuwayrī’s Biography**

The most substantive information on al-Nuwayrī’s life, family background, teachers, acquaintances, and education comes from the *Nihāya* itself. As Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn notes, al-Nuwayrī is not particularly forthcoming about the details of his life; the few references are found mostly within the final chapter of the fifth book (§5.5.12), beginning in the 28<sup>th</sup> manuscript volume, but there are also isolated references throughout the work that help flesh out some of the details of his professional career.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>82</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 28.

The most self-consciously autobiographical discussion of his life is his own birth notice, which appears in the events of the year 677 AH (1278-1279 CE):<sup>83</sup>

On the early morning of Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of Dhū 'l-Qa'da, in the year 677 AH [April 5<sup>th</sup> 1279 CE], the author and compiler of this book was born, the humble servant of God, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Dā'im b. Munajjā b. 'Alī b. Ṭarrād b. Khaṭṭāb b. Naṣr b. Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Ja'far b. Hilāl b. al-Ḥusayn b. Layth b. Ṭalḥa b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq 'Abd Allāh b. 'Atīq, the Companion of the Prophet of God (peace and blessings upon him), the son of his Companion, the father of his Companions, the grandfather of his Companion, and the Caliph after him, the "second of the two," Ibn Abī Quḥāfa 'Uthmān, may God be pleased with them, b. 'Āmir b. 'Amr b. Ka'b b. Sa'd b. Taym b. Murra b. Ka'b b. Lu'ayy b. Ghālib b. Fīhr b. Mālīk b. al-Naḍr b. Kināna b. Khuzayma b. Mudrika b. Ilyās b. Muḍar b. Nizār b. Ma'add b. 'Adnān – and [the book's] author is known by al-Nuwayrī, may God have mercy on him and be pleased with him. His birthplace was in the city of Akhmīm in Upper Egypt, on the date given.<sup>84</sup>

This autobiographical notice tells us little besides the place and date of al-Nuwayrī's birth, and his purported lineage from Abū Bakr, the first of the Rightly

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<sup>83</sup> While both printed editions place this birth notice in the year 677 AH, Amīnah Jamāl al-Dīn claims that the manuscript she consulted at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya in the 1980s states that al-Nuwayrī was born ten years earlier, in 667 (see Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 33, fn. 2). Having not had the chance to consult the relevant manuscript, I will defer to the consensus opinion and assume that the date given in the printed editions is correct, which is corroborated by two later biographical dictionaries, as discussed below.

<sup>84</sup> *Nihāya* 30:386-87 (DKI: 30:248). In both editions of the *Nihāya*, the name of al-Nuwayrī's great-great-grandfather is given as 'Ubāda instead of Munajjā. However, the editor of the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya edition states in a footnote (see 30:386, fn. 3) that although the manuscript gives the name as Munajjā, he corrected it to 'Ubāda based on a death notice for al-Nuwayrī in al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa-'l-Tarjama wa-'l-Nashr, 1956-73), 2:363. The trouble is that al-Maqrīzī gets the rest of the lineage wrong, and al-Nuwayrī provides his own lineage on two other occasions in the *Nihāya* (31:409-10 and 33:284, DKI: 31:255 and 33:216), and both times the name of his great-great-grandfather is given as Munajjā. It seems very unlikely that al-Nuwayrī would have incorrectly copied his own lineage given the great pride he takes in recounting it (see below), which is why I have assumed that Munajjā is correct, and not 'Ubāda (as most modern scholars have assumed).

Guided Caliphs and the source of al-Nuwayrī's *nisba* al-Bakrī.<sup>85</sup> His birth place, Akhmīm, known in ancient times as Panopolis, was an important religious and economic center in Upper Egypt. Al-Nuwayrī mentions having seen its ancient temple (*Birbat Ahkmīm*), but he does not say when he left Akhmīm for Qūṣ, the scholarly city where he began his studies.<sup>86</sup> Further information begins to fill out the picture in the obituary devoted to his father:

And in this year, my father died – may God have mercy upon him – Tāj al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Abī ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Dā’im b. Munajjā b. ‘Alī al-Bakrī al-Tamīmī al-Qurashī, known as al-Nuwayrī. The rest of his lineage has already been recounted in the notice of my birth in the year 677. He died – may God have mercy upon him – before the evening prayer on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Dhū ‘l-Ḥijja in the year 699 [September 7, 1300], in the Ṣāliḥiyya Najmiyya Madrasa, in the Mālikī instruction hall. His illness began on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month. He was born in Cairo in a madrasa known as Manāzil al-‘Izz in the year 618. He died – may God have mercy upon him – without neglecting his prayers; he performed his ritual ablutions four times before the afternoon prayers on the day of his death, and he had an incurable disease, then he prayed the afternoon prayer standing up. He died before the call to evening prayer on that day. His last words, after calling God’s blessings down upon me, were the pronouncement of the two testimonies of faith. Then God took him, and he was buried the next day, Friday... in the mausoleum of the Chief Judge Zayn al-Dīn al-Mālikī, may God have mercy on him and me.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> He rehearses this lineage later in the *Nihāya* (33:284, DKI: 33:216), when he recounts a dream he had in the year 729 AH, in which he saw the Prophet Muḥammad seated in the Nāṣiriyya madrasa talking about his wife ‘Ā’isha, the daughter of Abū Bakr. In the dream, al-Nuwayrī goes to the Prophet and tells him that ‘Ā’isha is his own paternal aunt (*‘ammātī*), and recites his lineage to prove it. The Prophet concurs with him, and al-Nuwayrī wakes up, gladdened by the dream.

<sup>86</sup> On Akhmīm, see Stefan Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit. Eine Sammlung christlicher Stätten in Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, unter Ausschluss von Alexandria, Kairo, des Apa-Mena-Klosters (Dēr Abū Mīna), der Skētis (Wādī n-Naṭrūn) und der Sinai-Region* (Wiesbaden 1984–92), 1:80–96; Petra M. Sijpesteijn, “Akhmīm,” *EI3*.

<sup>87</sup> *Nihāya*, 31:409–10 (DKI: 31:255–56).

The fact of his father's birth and death in educational institutions<sup>88</sup> suggests that he was a member of the scholarly class and a close associate of Zayn al-Dīn 'Alī b. Makhlūf al-Nuwayrī al-Jazūlī, who served as Mālikī chief justice from 1285-1318.<sup>89</sup> This latter figure played an important role in the younger al-Nuwayrī's life, but it is unclear whether it was he who secured him his first job in administration. In al-Nuwayrī's obituary for the chief judge he notes the man's generosity and kindness to his friends, "particularly the people of his own town," which fits a pattern of nepotism in Mamluk administrative recruitment. On the other hand, the fact that al-Nuwayrī did not become a Mālikī like Ibn Makhlūf but rather a Shāfi'ī may suggest that his most important early patron was another famous chief judge, Ibn Daqīq al-Īd, a fellow resident of Qūṣ, whom al-Nuwayrī venerates.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> On the practice of using madrasas as burial places during this period, see Jonathan Berkey, "Mamluks and the World of Higher Islamic Education," in *Modes de transmission de la culture religieuse en Islam*, ed. Hassan Elboudrari, (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1992), 93-116. Berkey argues that "the presence of entombed *wāqifs* and their relatives ensured that institutions of higher education would play a part in the broader Muslim phenomenon of the *ziyārāt*, the visitation of the dead in their tombs." (99) See also Danielle Talmon-Heller, "*Ilm, Shafā'ah, and Barakah*: The Resources of Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Ulama," *Mamluk Studies Review* 13.2 (2009): 23-46; Mahmood Ibrahim, "Practice and Reform in Fourteenth-Century Damascene Madrasas," *Mamluk Studies Review* 11.1 (2007): 69-83. Ibrahim shows how, conversely, spaces primarily intended for burial—such as the mausoleum (*turba*)—"had developed, as an institution supported by *waqf*, during the Mamluk period and referred to a complex structure that housed the tomb and included a mosque and facilities for the staff."... Thus, a *turba*, in its manifold manifestations, was among the various types of institutions where knowledge was exchanged." (71)

<sup>89</sup> See Joseph H. Escovitz, "Patterns of Appointment to the Chief Judgeships of Cairo during the Bahārī Mamlūk Period," *Arabica*, T. 30, Fasc. 2 (June, 1983): 147-68.

<sup>90</sup> "When an immigrant from the provinces climbed to a high social or political station, he found himself in a position to extend to family, friends and fellow provincials the benefits of his patronage. So, for example, when the famous scholar Ibn Daqīq al-Īd, originally from the town of Qūṣ in the Sa'īd, held the office of Shāfi'ī *qāḍī 'l-quḍāt* (chief judge) in Cairo at the end of the thirteenth century, numerous other Qūṣīs received appointments in the city as deputy *qāḍīs*, professional witnesses (*shāhids*), and teachers in *madrasas*" (Berkey, "Culture and Society," 382).

Tāj al-Dīn's obituary indicates that he had another son named Muḥammad but al-Nuwayrī does not mention him or any other siblings in the *Nihāya*. The only other relatives discussed are (1) his father's grandfather Zakī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Dā'im,<sup>91</sup> who lived in al-Nuwayra and was a follower of a well-known and respected Sufi shaykh; and (2) his father's first cousin, the judge 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of another judge Ṣafī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sharaf al-Dīn Ya'qūb al-Nuwayrī. This latter figure served as the head of the chancery in Tripoli, and in several other high-ranking positions in Ṣafad, Ḥamā, and al-Karak.<sup>92</sup> Although I have come across no direct evidence in the *Nihāya* supporting Krachkovskii's claim that al-Nuwayrī's father was "an official of note,"<sup>93</sup> the connections that his son enjoyed from a young age, coupled with the fact that he had a cousin who was a prominent bureaucrat in Syria, suggests that the family business was indeed administration.

Al-Nuwayrī's decade or so in administration straddled the second and third reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1298-1309, 1310-41). He began his career in Syria in 1302 (and not, as has been previously assumed, in Cairo in 1298).<sup>94</sup> In that year, at the age of

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<sup>91</sup> *Nihāya*, 29:72-75 (DKI: 29:46-48).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 32:276 (DKI: 32:213).

<sup>93</sup> Krachkovskii, "al-Nuwayrī," *EI*.

<sup>94</sup> There has been some confusion among scholars about when and where al-Nuwayrī began his administrative career. Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn and Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi have both proposed that al-Nuwayrī got his first job in Cairo in 1298 at the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* (the Bureau of the Sultan's Privy Purse), spent three years working there while living at the Nāṣiriyya madrasa, and was then posted to a different assignment in Syria in 1302. They suggest that he returned to his old job and residence in Cairo in 1304, and was given the additional responsibility of supervising the Manṣūrī hospital-mosque complex, and a range of other properties. This chronology is based on two statements found in a manuscript of the *Nihāya*'s 30<sup>th</sup> volume at the Egyptian National Library (MS 549, *ma'ārif 'amma*). The first statement places al-Nuwayrī in Cairo at the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* and the Nāṣiriyya in the year 1298: "...and at the time, I was managing the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* for the sultan, and living at the Nāṣiriyya madrasa" (see Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-*

23, he left Cairo to manage the sultan's properties in Syria (*mubāsharat al-amlāk al-sultāniyya bi-l-Shām*).<sup>95</sup> Two and a half years later, he returned to Cairo, where he was appointed to the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*, managing al-Nāṣir's properties and several of the institutions endowed by his father, while living at the Nāṣiriyya madrasa.<sup>96</sup>

Al-Nuwayrī held this post for five years until September 1309, when he joined al-Nāṣir in the Syrian fortress of al-Karak during his second interregnum. They returned to Cairo at the end of February 1310, but al-Nuwayrī soon fell out of favor due to a political dust-up involving the steward of the sultan (*wakīl al-khāṣṣ al-sharīf*) Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. 'Ubāda. Al-Nuwayrī does not refer to this incident in the *Nihāya*,

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*kitābuhu*, 36, fn. 1, citing Dār al-Kutub MS 549, vol 30, fol. 12. See also Chapoutot-Remadi, "al-Nuwayrī," *EI2*.) The second statement is found in the same volume but many pages later, in the chapter for the year 703 AH. In it, al-Nuwayrī says that he arrived in Cairo from Damascus on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān 703 (May 3, 1304 CE) to take up his responsibilities at the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* (see Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī*, 55, fn. 1, citing Dār al-Kutub MS 549, vol. 30, fol. 27. See also *ibid.*, 56, fn. 1, citing a different MS 592, vol 4, fol. 3.) On the basis of these two statements, Jamāl al-Dīn and Chapoutot-Remadi proposed that al-Nuwayrī began his career in Cairo, went to Syria, and returned to Cairo a few years later. I propose that this chronology is inaccurate, and that the two statements in question refer to one and the same period. This conjecture is based on two sources of evidence. First, when the *Nihāya*'s 30<sup>th</sup> volume was edited, it was discovered that MS 549 had many folios out of order (see Dār al-Kutub edition, 31:5-6, for editor's introduction). Among the sections that were re-arranged, presumably, was the first passage about al-Nuwayrī's employment at the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*. Both editions of the *Nihāya* now place this statement in the chapter for the year 703 AH, just a few pages away from the second statement (see *Nihāya* DKI 32:51 for the first statement and DKI 32:54 for the second). This makes more sense, given that the Nāṣiriyya madrasa did not officially open for service until the year 1303, so al-Nuwayrī could not have been living there in 1298. As I discuss below, the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad bought the madrasa from his predecessor al-'Ādil Kitbugha in 1298, but construction was not completed for several years. Therefore, the chronology implied by the arrangement of the printed edition of the *Nihāya* must be correct: al-Nuwayrī's first documented appointment was in Damascus in January 1302, and he only joined the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* in Cairo and took up residence at the Nāṣiriyya in May 1304.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Nuwayrī's letter of investiture was written by one Bahā' al-Dīn b. Sallāma, a "clerk of the roll" (*kātib al-darj*), and was dated 22 Jumādā I 701 AH (January 23, 1302 CE). See *Nihāya* 32:14 (DKI: 32:6).

<sup>96</sup> Al-Nuwayrī arrived in Cairo on 27 Ramaḍān 703 AH (May 3, 1304 CE). See *ibid.*, 32:73, 78 (DKI: 32:51, 54).

but it was presumably a well-publicized scandal because several of his biographers allude to it. Al-Maqrīzī provides the most detail:

[Al-Nuwayrī] grew close to the Sultan through the intermediary of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Ubāda, the Sultan’s deputy, who appointed him as overseer of the Nāṣiriyya and Maṣūriyya *madrasas* and other things, and facilitated his meetings with al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, and the Sultan began to summon him all the time and converse with him. It so happened that he asked him about Ibn ‘Ubāda, and gradually fooled him into slandering him. The Sultan informed Ibn ‘Ubāda about that, and handed [al-Nuwayrī] over to him to do with him as he pleased, so he gave him a harsh flogging and confiscated his property. And the people disapproved greatly of al-Nuwayrī and impugned his slander of Ibn ‘Ubāda, for he was, in all truth, the source of his favor [with the sultan].<sup>97</sup>

Modern scholars have not known quite what to make of the Ibn ‘Ubāda affair, treating it as an unfortunate but minor incident in an otherwise celebrated career.<sup>98</sup> As Donald Little has recently shown, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Ubāda al-Anṣārī al-Ḥalabī was a powerful figure and close advisor to al-Nāṣir, who played an important role in the state bureaucracy at a pivotal moment in its history. Because so little is known about this figure, it is worth quoting Little’s description of him in full:

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<sup>97</sup> Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā ‘l-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1991), 521-522.

<sup>98</sup> Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn is uncertain of who Ibn ‘Ubāda is (see idem, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 62-63), and ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Nadwī is similarly at a loss. Chapoutot-Remadi refers to him as Ibn ‘Abbāda, and paraphrases al-Maqrīzī’s account of the events, but does not shed any light on this event’s deeper historical significance. She describes the incident as follows: “After this triumphant return, one of al-Nuwayrī’s patrons, the steward of the sovereign, *wakīl al-khāṣṣ*, Ibn ‘Abbāda (d. 710/1310), allowed him to work quite closely with the sovereign. This Ibn ‘Abbāda was himself the appointee of the supreme *qādī* Ibn Makhlūf, who had given him the task of administering the property left behind by Qalāwūn. This individual rose very quickly in the favour of the sultan. In his turn, he seems to have noticed the talents of al-Nuwayrī, entrusting to him the administration of the great complex constructed by Qalāwūn and of *al-madrasa Nāṣiriyya*. Through his good offices, al-Nuwayrī had regular access to Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, and in numerous instances had occasion to work directly on his behalf. This excessively rapid promotion seems to have turned his head... and he spoke disparagingly of his patron, for whom he had little regard.” Idem, “al-Nuwayrī,” *EI2*.



The sultan's *wakīl* [personal agent] was a clerk named al-Qāḍī al-Ra'īs Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. 'Ubāda al-Anṣārī al-Ḥalabī, who had worked for the Mālikī qāḍī Ibn Makhlūf and as a legal witness in Qalāwūn's *khizāna* [treasury]. Upon the death of Qalāwūn he was involved in the settlement of his estate; in this capacity he came into contact with the boy Muḥammad, later to be al-Nāṣir, and was able to win his favor. He accompanied the sultan on his first campaign against the Mongols in 699/1299-1300 and in 707/1307-8 was put in charge of Qalāwūn's tomb in Cairo and the royal endowments and properties. He accompanied al-Nāṣir to Karak during the sultan's self-imposed exile, and when they returned to Cairo in 709/1309 Ibn 'Ubāda was assigned the sultan's *wakāla* [stewardship]. Although the sources give no information about his specific duties they agree that he had great personal power because of the sultan's favor... Curiously, Ibn 'Ubāda refused the sultan's offer of the vizierate, but al-Ṣafadī says that he did so out of deceit and hypocrisy. In any event he held on to his office until his death in 710/1310, the only lifelong Muslim to have held this position under al-Nāṣir.<sup>99</sup>

When Ibn 'Ubāda died, he was succeeded in his position by the famous Coptic convert 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hibat Allāh b. al-Sadīd al-Miṣrī, known as Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr. This individual, though initially appointed *wakīl al-khāṣṣ*, was then given the new title of *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* (Supervisor of the Bureau of the Privy Purse), thereby inaugurating an office that would wield tremendous power for much of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Mamluk sources suggest that "nothing was done in Cairo without Karīm al-Dīn's approval, whether employing a scribe or paying a viceroy's stipend," and al-Nuwayrī himself claims that the sultan "delegated to him complete disposal of property, appointments, buying and selling, marriage, manumission of slaves, etc."<sup>100</sup> Karīm al-Dīn also oversaw

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<sup>99</sup> Donald P. Little, "Notes on the early *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*," in in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 241-42.

<sup>100</sup> See Donald Little, "Coptic Converts to Islam During the Bahārī Mamluk Period," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic lands, eighth to eighteenth centuries*, eds. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 272.

financial-administrative centralization in the form of several cadastral surveys in Syria and Egypt, which had the effect of nearly tripling the sultan's financial holdings (from 1/6 to 5/12 of all tax revenues).<sup>101</sup> And under Karīm al-Dīn's successor, Tāj al-Dīn Ishāq b. al-Qammāt, the offices of the Egyptian viceroy (*nā'ib al-salṭana*) and the vizierate were both abolished and their powers divided between the secretary of state (*kātib al-sirr*), the superintendent of scribal offices (*shādd al-dawāwīn*), and the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*, the latter being first among equals.<sup>102</sup>

In the context of this discussion, the year 1310 is a pivotal one. In February, al-Nāṣir returned from al-Karak to reassume the throne in Cairo and begin his third reign, which would last until 1341. Both al-Nuwayrī and Ibn 'Ubāda had accompanied al-Nāṣir to al-Karak in 1309, and were rewarded for their loyalty by being reappointed to high office upon their return the following year. Given that Ibn 'Ubāda had served al-Nāṣir's father Qalāwūn, he would likely have been an old man in 1310, and although there is no direct evidence for this, it is not unreasonable to suppose that al-Nuwayrī may have fancied himself well-suited to take over his superior's position in due course. In this critical moment of flux, during one of his private audiences with al-Nāṣir, al-Nuwayrī apparently said something about his patron that annoyed the sultan, who informed Ibn 'Ubāda. What might that have been? We have no way of knowing, but as I discuss

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<sup>101</sup> Holt, "al-Nāṣir," *EI2*.

<sup>102</sup> See Northrup, "The Baḥrī Mamlūk Sultanate," 264. Gottschalk, ("Dīwān," *EI2*) adds the *nāẓir al-māl* (supervisor of the exchequer) to the list of officials inheriting the duties of the viceroy and vizier, but Little considers this figure to be synonymous with the *shādd al-dawāwīn* (see "Notes on the early *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*," 241). See *ibid.* for an amusing excerpt from al-Ṣafadī (*A'yān*, vol. 2, 37-38) in which he quotes the last vizier under al-Nāṣir complaining about the diminution of his duties before the abolishment of the office: "I am but a peasant to [the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*]. I speak to the sultan only about the cheese depot, the apple house, and the processing of dates...!"

below, al-Nuwayrī had reason to look unkindly upon Ibn ‘Ubāda for his double-dealings in the establishment of the Nāṣiriyya madrasa. At any rate, by the end of the year 1310, al-Nuwayrī had been dispatched to the Syrian town of Tripoli (perhaps the equivalent of Siberia as far as administrative careers were concerned),<sup>103</sup> Ibn ‘Ubāda was dead, and the age of Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr had begun. Any hope that al-Nuwayrī may have had for attaining the position of *wakīl al-khāṣṣ* was lost forever.

In Tripoli, al-Nuwayrī served as superintendent of army finances (*nāẓir al-jaysh*) and was head of the chancery (*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā’*), before returning to Egypt a final time in November of 1312, where he was made to oversee the financial revenues of al-Daḡhaliyya and al-Murtāḡhiyya, two provinces in the Nile Delta. We do not know how long al-Nuwayrī held these positions or when he retired from administration, but it may have been around 1316.<sup>104</sup> For the remainder of his life, he devoted himself to the *Nihāya*, keeping body and soul together by making and selling copies of al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḡīḥ*.

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<sup>103</sup> Al-Nuwayrī left for Tripoli on 15 Muḥarram 710 (June 14, 1310 CE); see *Nihāya* 32:161 (DKI: 32:122).

<sup>104</sup> See Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 71; Chapoutot-Remadi, “al-Nuwayrī,” *EI*2.

**Table 1: Biographical Timeline**

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Biographical Events</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Political Timeline</i>
April 5, 1279	Born in Akhmīm, Upper Egypt	1279-1293	Reigns of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl
1279 – ca. 1298	Early life in Upper Egypt, studies in Qūṣ		
1298-1302	Likely resident in Cairo; no professional appointments noted.	1298	Al-Nāṣir begins second reign
1302-1304	Serves in Syria with the <i>dīwān al-khāṣṣ</i>	1302	Conquest of Rhodes; end of Frankish threat to Syria
1304-1309	In Cairo, living at the Nāṣiriyya, administering the <i>dīwān al-khāṣṣ</i> , the Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī and other properties.	1305	Beginning of Ibn Taymiyya’s trials in Egypt (al-Nuwayrī serves as an intermediary)
1309	Follows al-Nāṣir to al-Karak	1309	Al-Nāṣir’s interregnum
1310	Returns with al-Nāṣir to Cairo, but falls out of favor.	1310	Beginning of third reign of al-Nāṣir (1310-41)
1310-1312	Sent to Tripoli, <i>dīwān al-inshā’</i> and <i>dīwān al-jaysh</i> .	1310	Death of Ibn ‘Ubāda; Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr appointed <i>nāẓir al-khāṣṣ</i>
1312 – ca. 1316	Returns to Cairo, oversees al-Daḡhaliyya and al-Murtāḥiyya	1312	Arghūn al-Nāṣirī made vice-regent of Egypt
ca. 1314	Embarks upon composition of the <i>Nihāya</i>	1316	Cadastral survey ( <i>rawk</i> ) of Egypt complete
1321	Begins second copy of the <i>Nihāya</i>	1324	Death of Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr
		1329	Vizierate is abolished; <i>dīwān al-khāṣṣ</i> is further empowered
		1332	Al-Nashw becomes <i>nāẓir al-khāṣṣ</i>
June 5, 1333	Death in Cairo		

## Compiling the *Nihāya*

We do not know exactly when al-Nuwayrī began to compile the *Nihāya*. On this question, there are two sources of evidence to consider: autograph manuscripts with copy dates, and dated references within the text. On the basis of the first source, Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn has suggested that al-Nuwayrī likely made two copies of the *Nihāya*, one begun before 1318, and another started in 1321.<sup>105</sup> A single manuscript from the first set (volume 19) has survived, and it is dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of Jumādā II, 718 (August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1318). Four other dated autographs (vols. 1, 4, 17, and 18) belong to the purported second set, and were copied within a ten-month span between 1321 and 1322.<sup>106</sup> Remarks in the text of volumes 29 and 30 date them to 1325, meaning that the final volume (no. 31) was composed between 1325 and al-Nuwayrī’s death in 1333.

The closest approximation of a composition date can be found in the table of contents of the *Nihāya*, where al-Nuwayrī describes chapter §5.5.12, which covers the political history of Egypt “up until our composition of this work in the year seven hundred and ...” (*ilā ḥīn waḍ‘inā li-hādha ‘l-ta’līfī sana ... wa-sab‘ami’a*).<sup>107</sup> Unfortunately, the text trails off without specifying the precise year. Given that the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya edition of this first volume was based on the 1321 autograph, this lacuna in

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<sup>105</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 111-14. See also Chapoutot-Remadi, “al-Nuwayrī,” *EI2*. Jamāl al-Dīn infers the 1312 start date on the basis of anecdotal evidence: al-Nuwayrī stops discussing the affairs of the chancery after 1312, and mainly deals with political history and the scholarly life of Mamluk Cairo. See Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī*, 111-12.

<sup>106</sup> These volumes were used as the basis for the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya edition of the *Nihāya*. I have been unable to determine their shelfmarks.

<sup>107</sup> In her article for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi says that the *Nihāya*’s “first volume (p. 16) bears the date 714/1314.” I have not been able to locate any such date in the printed edition of the work. See Chapoutot-Remadi, “Al-Nuwayrī,” *EI2*.

the text is interesting. It may suggest that al-Nuwayrī planned to go back and fill in the composition date after he finished the historical section, so as to provide an accurate *terminus ante quem* for chapter §5.5.12 in the table of contents. As it happened, al-Nuwayrī did not go back and pencil in the date, and perhaps neglected to do so in the first version of the work as well, since two later copies of the manuscript preserve the lacuna in the same spot (see figures below).

The manuscript evidence, then, suggests that al-Nuwayrī made at least two versions of the *Nihāya*, but does not tell us when he began composing the first version. I have found some additional statements in the text of the *Nihāya* that shed new light on its compilation history. Viewed together with the manuscript material, these remarks provide evidence that al-Nuwayrī either began writing the *Nihāya* in 1314, or well before Jamāl al-Dīn’s proposed date of 1312. (See Table 2, which assembles all of the relevant evidence, arranged by date.)

Figure 1: Paris BnF, Mss or., Arabe 5050, fol. 10b<sup>108</sup>

وَمَا مَلَكُوهُ مِنْ بِلَادِ الْمَغْرِبِ وَكَيْفَ اسْتَوْلَوْا عَلَى الدِّيَارِ الْمِصْرِيَّةِ وَالدِّيَارِ  
الْشَامِيَّةِ وَالْجُزْجَانِيَّةِ وَالشُّعُورِ وَالنَّوْحَلِ وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَنْزَلْتُمْ دَوْلَتَهُمْ  
وَقِيَامَ الدَّوْلَةِ الْأَبُوبِيَّةِ وَأَخْبَارَ مَلِكِهَا بِمِصْرَ وَالشَّامِ إِلَى حِينَ انْقِرَاضِهَا  
وَقِيَامَ دَوْلَةِ التُّرْكِ وَمِنْ مَلِكٍ مِنْهُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْبَاقِهِمْ وَمَا جَارَوْهُ مِنَ الْأَقْبَالِ  
وَمَا أَخْبَوْهُ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكِ وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَخْبَارِهِمْ وَمَا اسْتَقَرَّ فِيهِ مَلِكٌ لَدُنْ هَذِهِ  
الدَّوْلَةِ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكِ إِلَى حِينَ وَصَعْنَا هَذَا الثَّالِثِينَ وَنِسْفَةَ

Figure 2: Leiden University, MS Or. 273, fol. 3b<sup>109</sup>

العباسية وهم الملوك الصمديون الذين انتسبوا الى علي بن ابي طالب رضي الله عنه وكان من امرهم وما سلكوه من بلاد المغرب وكيف  
استولوا على اباد المصيرية والبلاد الشامية والحبشية والنبطية والسواحل وغير ذلك الى ان انقرضت دولتهم وبقيا الدولة الانوسية  
واخبار ملوكها مصر والشام الى حين انقراضها وقامت دولة الترك ومن ملك منهم من اصاب من بلاد مصر ما هو في ذلك وغيره  
ذلك من اخبار مصر وما استقر في ملك ملوك تلك الالة وله من الممالك التي وضعها هذا المؤلف في سنة  
السلطان السيد لاجل المالك الملك الناصر ناصر الدين ابا الدرداء السلطان الاكبر والملك الناصر ناصر الدين السلطان الشهيد الملك  
المصور سيف الدين ابي المطهر قلاوون الصالح حمله الله ملكه على امر الزمان . وعفي عنه والد صوب الرحمة والرضوان .  
**هذا مجموع ما يشتمل عليه الكتاب من فنون واصناف ودول وانواب** ثم طوى كل ارباب منها على اصول واخبار . وعي  
على فروع واخبار . ولما انتهت انوابه وفصوله . وانتهت جلته وتفضيله **رحمته بنهاية الارز في فنون الال**  
وايت فيه بالمقصود والقرص . واثبت الجوهر ونبت القرص . وطوقه بقلايد منقول . ورصعته بزياد منقول .  
فكلم في كالتاريخ بلباس السحاب والسترة ودفعها الكتاب . فاموال الامير جرح من فونه . وطاجن الجونه . وما اوردت فيه الاما  
علي على ان النور بميل اليه . وان الحواطر تشتمل عليه . ولعلت ان فيه خطا لغضا بلاني وعرضت طرقي . ولو خبرت  
طريق المقرص اعطت عناني ونبت غلطي . لكني تب في انار الله صلا قل . وسلك من جرح وصلح عالم جل . فان يكن  
اعترضا فلي علامه على القار . وقد علمت انه من صنف كما باقند استهدف واصم الاسماع وان كان لبعضها قد شرب . وخلق  
بالواقف عليه ان يمد ما يجده من ظلل . وان مصر ما لمج فيه من زلل . فاسبل عليها ستر معروك الذي سرت به قدما على عواري  
والذي ادى اليه اجسادى من اليف قد اصد ربه . والذي وقت عند عاني في تربه فقد ارزته . قد بلغت فيه وسمي .  
ولكن ليس من عثره الكتاب اسان . وباه استعين وعليه اتوكل . واليه اضترع في التيسير واتوسل . ومن فضله استمد العواب  
وباسمه استغ الكتاب  
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

<sup>108</sup> This manuscript is dated 737 AH (1336). It was copied in Aleppo only four years after al-Nuwayrī's death. Image used with permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

<sup>109</sup> This manuscript is undated but was part of the original Warner collection in Leiden, so the *terminus ad quem* is 1665 CE. Image used with permission of Leiden University.

**Table 2: Codicological & Textual Evidence for the *Nihāya*'s Compilation History**

<i>Volume</i>	<i>Date</i>
A <i>Nihāya</i> 1:25 (DKI: 1:19)	<p>الى حين وضعنا لهذا التأليف في سنة ... و سبعمائة</p> <p>“...up until our composition of this work in the year seven hundred and...”</p> <p>This lacuna is present in Paris MS Arabe 5050 and Leiden MS Or. 273 (see above)</p>
B <i>Nihāya</i> 27:114 (DKI: 27:78)	<p>هذا آخر ما اتصل إلينا من أخبارهم إلى حين وضعنا لهذا التأليف في سنة أربع عشرة وسبعمائة .</p> <p>“...And this was the last we heard of [the Sultanate of Rūm], up until our composition of this work in the year 714 [1314 CE]...”</p>
C <i>Nihāya</i> 27:62 (DKI: 27:115)	<p>وهذه القلعة في عصرنا هذا إلى سنة أربع عشرة وسبعمائة خرابا لا باب عليها والله أعلم .</p> <p>“And this castle [i.e. Qal‘at Ja‘bar, in northern Syria] in our time, up to the year 714 [1314 CE], is a ruin...”</p>
D <i>Nihāya</i> 18:107 (DKI: 18:68)	<p>والكتاب بأيديهم إلى وقتنا هذا ؛ وهو العشر الآخر من ذي القعدة سنة ستّ عشرة وسبعمائة</p> <p>“... and the book remains in their hands to the present time, the last third of Dhū ‘l-Qa‘da, 716 [February, 1317]...”</p>
E Autograph MS vol. 19	Copy date of 9 Jumādā II 718 (7 August 1318)
F <i>Nihāya</i> 24:352 (DKI: 24:193)	<p>وعثمان هذا هو الملك القائم في وقتنا هذا ، في سنة تسع عشرة وسبعمائة .</p> <p>“And that ‘Uthman [b. Ya‘qūb, the Mārinid sultan] is the current king at our time, in the year 719 [1319 CE]...”</p>
G Autograph MS vol. 1	Copy date of 20 Dhū ‘l-Qa‘da 721 (11 December 1321)
H Autograph MS vol. 5	Copy date of 22 Jumādā I 722 (8 June 1322)
I Autograph MS vol. 17	Copy date of 7 Ramaḍān 722 (19 September 1322)
J Autograph MS vol. 18	Copy date of 26 Ramaḍān 722 (8 October 1322)



**Table 2 (cont.): Codicological & Textual Evidence for the *Nihāya*'s Compilation History**

	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Date</i>
K	<i>Nihāya</i> 31:59 (DKI: 31:40), corresponding to vol. 29 of the MS	إلى حين وضعنا لهذا الجزء ، وذلك في سلخ شهر رجب ، سنة خمس وعشرين وسبعمائة “...up until the time that we wrote this volume, and that was at the end of Rajab, 725 [early July, 1325 CE]...”
L	<i>Nihāya</i> 32:118 (DKI: 32:86) corresponding to vol. 30 of the MS	إلى أن سطرنا هذه الأحرف في سنة خمس وعشرين وسبعمائة “...up until the time that we wrote these letters, in the year 725 [1325 CE]...”
M	<i>Nihāya</i> 32:198 (DKI: 32:151) corresponding to vol. 30 of the MS	وهو مستمر في نيابة السلطنة إلى وقتنا هذا في سنة خمسة وعشرين وسبعمائة “...and he remains the governor at this time, in the year 725 [1325 CE]...”

Statements D and F in the table above likely belong to the same set of manuscripts as manuscript E, the autograph that Jamāl al-Dīn argued was part of al-Nuwayrī's first version of the *Nihāya*. One might also argue that the relatively few volumes composed in the span of time between D and E (a year and half) suggests that D belongs to yet another, even earlier, set of the *Nihāya*. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suppose that al-Nuwayrī's copying speed for his first version of the text would have been considerably slower than the version represented by autographs G, H, I, and J, which he produced along with 14 other volumes in less than a year.

The picture becomes cloudier when we consider statements B and C in the 27<sup>th</sup> volume of the printed edition. The first appears in a discussion of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rūm. After mentioning the ascension of the Mongol vassal Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mas'ūd to the throne, al-Nuwayrī says simply: “And this was the last we heard of them, up until the time we composed this work in the year 714.” A few dozen pages later, al-Nuwayrī

refers to the Zangid fortress Qal‘at Ja‘bar in northern Syria, and says: “And this castle in our time, up to the year 714, is a ruin...”

There are two ways to interpret these dated statements. One could read them as an indication that al-Nuwayrī was writing volume 27 as early as the year 1314, which would mean that the manuscript vol. 19 dated to 1318 (autograph E) was definitely not part of the first version of the *Nihāya*. It would also likely mean that al-Nuwayrī began composing the *Nihāya* before Jamāl al-Dīn’s proposed date of 1312, as he would have had to complete twenty-seven volumes of the first draft of the text in less than two years. That seems unlikely, even taking into account his considerable skill as a copyist.

Secondly, one could interpret al-Nuwayrī’s statement B (*ilā ḥīn waḍ‘inā li-hādha ‘l-ta’līf*) as a reference to the beginning of his composition of the *Nihāya* as a whole. In that case, the mention of the year 714 in reference C would simply be a terminus post quem for the ruinous state of the castle (i.e., “this castle in our times, [at least] up to the year 714, is a ruin”). On the basis of the current evidence, it is impossible to determine which of these two interpretations is correct. However, given the similarities in wording between statements A and B (both use the term *ta’līf*, which does not appear in the other dated statements), it seems safe to presume that 1314 CE is as good a guess as any for when al-Nuwayrī began to write the *Nihāya*.

### **Al-Nuwayrī’s Biographers**

The dozen or so biographical notices that appear in the century following al-Nuwayrī’s death do not provide a great deal of additional information about his life, but they permit a glimpse into the evolution of his reputation. Besides the *Nihāya* itself, the most

significant historical source for al-Nuwayrī's life is a biographical notice by his acquaintance Kamāl al-Dīn Ja'far b. Tha'lab al-Udfuwī (d. 748/1347), the author of a biographical dictionary devoted to the scholars and notables of Upper Egypt. While both al-Udfuwī and al-Nuwayrī spent important parts of their early lives in the scholarly town of Qūṣ,<sup>110</sup> it is unlikely that they met there, the latter having moved to Cairo by the turn of the century while the former arrived in Qūṣ to begin his studies in 1301-2.<sup>111</sup> Most of al-Nuwayrī's later biographers drew upon al-Udfuwī's notice, which is translated below:

Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Bakrī, known as Shihāb [al-Dīn], al-Nuwayrī by origin, al-Qūṣī born and raised. He studied *ḥadīth* with al-Sharīf Mūsā b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ya'qūb b. Aḥmad b. al-Ṣābūnī, Aḥmad al-Ḥajjār, Zaynab bt. Yaḥyā, the chief judge Abī 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Jamā'a, and others. He wrote a great deal, copying al-Bukhārī several times, and compiled a large history in thirty volumes. He became close with the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir who put him in charge of some of his affairs, yet [the sultan] tricked him (*'amila 'alayhi*) and summoned Ibn 'Ubāda—who was the one who had given him access to the sultan—and he flogged him. Ibn 'Ubāda then forgave him. He held numerous scribal offices: he was Supervisor of Army Revenues (*nāẓir al-jaysh*) in Tripoli and he oversaw the bureau of al-Daḡhaliyya and al-Murtāḥiyya. He was intelligent, handsome, noble, and generous, and loving to his friends. He fasted for Ramaḍān during the year that he died, and he recited the Qur'ān assiduously. Each day after the afternoon prayers he would commence reading the Qur'ān until sunset. He was afflicted with pain in the ends of his fingers, which was the cause of his death. He died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of Ramaḍān in the year 733 [June 5, 1333 CE], and he was the author of some decent poetry and prose. He was my friend. May God have mercy on him.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> On Qūṣ, see Jean-Claude Garcin's magisterial *Un centre musulman de la Haute-Égypte médiévale: Qūṣ* (Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1976). On the city's Bahrī period, which is when it witnessed its height as a provincial capital, military base, and center for scholars and poets, see pp. 181-410, esp. 287-357 (on Qūṣ as a center for teaching and jurisprudence). Also see idem, "Qūṣ," *EI2*.

<sup>111</sup> Garcin, *Un centre musulman*, 299.

<sup>112</sup> See Ja'far b. Tha'lab al-Udfuwī, *al-Ṭāli' al-sa'īd al-jāmi' asmā' nujabā' al-Ṣa'īd* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya lil-Ta'līf wa 'l-Tarjama, 1966), 96-97. Note the incorrect name of al-Nuwayrī's

Al-Udfuwī's account of al-Nuwayrī's life, while relatively brief, is illuminating for what it says and does not say. Despite studying *ḥadīth* with several prominent teachers, there is no indication that al-Nuwayrī ever held a teaching post himself. Al-Udfuwī's description of the *Nihāya* as "a large history in thirty volumes" provides an indication of its contemporary classification, as well as a sign that the work circulated *in toto* within a few years of al-Nuwayrī's death and was not broken up into its constituent parts. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363) includes al-Nuwayrī in his *A'yān al-ʿaṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, a biographical dictionary comprised of al-Ṣafadī's contemporaries. The two men, however, do not appear to have met, as al-Ṣafadī bases his biography of al-Nuwayrī almost entirely on al-Udfuwī, with the exception of the following report:<sup>113</sup>

He copied al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* eight times. He would draft a copy, collate it, copy the audition notes (*al-ṭibāq*), bind it, and sell it for between 700 or 1,000 *dirhams*, and he sold his work of history once to Jamāl al-Kufāt for 2,000 *dirhams*. He would fill three manuscript quires (*karārīs*) in a day.<sup>114</sup>

The quires of the *Nihāya*'s autographs preserved in Leiden are quinions, which suggests that al-Nuwayrī could copy sixty pages in a single day. That al-Nuwayrī could

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grandfather (who was Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Dāʾim), as well as his incorrect birthplace (which was Akhmīm and not Qūṣ).

<sup>113</sup> Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-ʿaṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr* (Frankfurt: Ma'had Tārīkh al-ʿUlūm al-ʿArabiyya wa-l-Islāmiyya, 1990) vol. 1, p. 83. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) draws his biography of al-Nuwayrī from al-Ṣafadī's account; see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mī'a l-thāmina* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1966-67), vol. 1, p. 209.

<sup>114</sup> The Coptic historian Mufaḍḍal b. Abī 'l-Faḍā'il (d. after 1358) states that al-Nuwayrī sold two copies of the *Nihāya* for 1,200 *dirhams* each. See Mufaḍḍal b. Abī 'l-Faḍā'il, *al-Nahj al-sadīd wa-l-durr al-farīd* (Freiburg im Breisgau: K. Schwarz, 1973), p. 55. Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1349) may be the source of the report about al-Nuwayrī's ability to copy three quires; see Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Wardī* (Cairo, 1868), vol. 2, p. 303.

get such a significant sum for a copy of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (a widely available text) speaks to his talents as a copyist.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, it seems odd that he would part with a copy of his thirty-volume magnum opus for only twice the price of the *ḥadīth* collection; if this report is correct, then the relatively cheap cost of the *Nihāya* may be explained by al-Nuwayrī's status as a virtually unknown author. The man who purchased the manuscript, Jamāl al-Kufāt (d. 745/1344), was a remarkable Mamluk official who, according to Ulrich Haarmann, "rose, as a protégé of the *amīr* Bashtāk...from fruit-vendor to *amīr* of a hundred, was named vizier, combined for the first time in Mamluk history the control of the Royal Fisc (*naẓar al-khāṣṣ*) and the Army Bureau (*naẓar al-jaysh*), proudly wore the *kallawta*, and -- to make the point -- even went so far as to learn Turkish, the language of his new social environment."<sup>116</sup>

Al-Ṣafadī writes in his larger biographical dictionary, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, that he had seen a copy of the *Nihāya*,<sup>117</sup> as did the Syrian jurist Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 1377) who described the work as "a book on *adab* and history in thirty volumes... [entitled] *Muntahā 'l-arab fī 'ilm al-adab*," which he had examined and copied and benefited from.<sup>118</sup> Ibn Kathīr (d. 1377) called al-Nuwayrī a "master copyist" (*nāsikh muṭīq*) and a rarity of

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<sup>115</sup> See Appendix C for a discussion of a Bukhārī manuscript purportedly copied by al-Nuwayrī.

<sup>116</sup> Ulrich Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33:1 (Spring 1988), 92. See also Donald P. Little, "The Recovery of a Lost Source for Baḥrī Mamlūk History: al-Yūsufī's *Nuzhat al-nāzir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* v. 94, no. 1 (Jan-Mar, 1974), 49; Nasser Rabbat, "Representing the Mamluks in Mamluk Historical Writing," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 69-70.

<sup>117</sup> Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt* (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, in Kommission bei F. A. Brockhaus, 1931-2007), vol. 7, p. 165.

<sup>118</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, *Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyām Manṣūr wa-banīh* (Cairo: al-Hay'a 'l-Misriyya 'l-Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1982), vol. 2, p. 246.

his age, but mistakenly claimed that he had composed two thirty-volume collections: one on *adab* (the aforementioned *Muntahā 'l-arab fī 'ilm al-adab*) and another on history.<sup>119</sup> The work's correct title first appears in al-Maqrīzī's (d. 845/1442) *Kitāb al-muqaffā 'l-kabīr*, a biographical dictionary about prominent Egyptians.<sup>120</sup> Al-Maqrīzī's account rehearses some of the previous material from al-Udfuwī and al-Ṣafadī, but also provides some important additions, notably the description of al-Nuwayrī's history as "famous" (*mashhūr*).

In considering the biography sketched out above, one of the clearest unifying threads is its institutional context. Al-Nuwayrī began his career working for the government, spent most of the following decade and a half overseeing institutions such as the Manṣūrī hospital in Cairo and the imperial chancery in Tripoli, and then lived for the rest of his life in another institution, the Nāṣiriyya madrasa, where he composed the *Nihāya*. This trajectory not atypical of the period and highlights the extent to which the principal nexus of literary and intellectual exchange was no longer the sovereign's court, where it had been centered in earlier Islamic polities. Under the Mamluks, other milieus such as educational institutions and the chancery would come to play a fundamental role in the cultural life of the civilian elite.<sup>121</sup> Al-Nuwayrī was a keen observer of the institutions where he lived and worked, taking an active interest in

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<sup>119</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-'l-nihāya* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda, 1932), vol 14, p. 164.

<sup>120</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā 'l-kabīr*, pp. 521-522. See also al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, 2:363, which has a brief death notice for al-Nuwayrī ("the author of the work of history").

<sup>121</sup> See Muhsin al-Musawi, "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose," in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, eds. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101-134.

their personnel, day-to-day functioning, and internal politics. In what follows, I consider three of these institutions—the Bureau of the Privy Purse (*dīwān al-khāṣṣ*), the Nāṣiriyya madrasa, and the Manṣūrī hospital—which played the most significant role in al-Nuwayrī’s professional and intellectual formation.

### A Scribal Milieu: al-Nuwayrī at the *Dīwān al-khāṣṣ*

Despite the centrality of the scribal bureaucracy to Mamluk political and social history, relatively little is known about its inner workings.<sup>122</sup> The picture of secretarial practice that emerges from the copious administrative literature of the period is highly idealized, as Bernadette Martel-Thoumian and Maaïke van Berkel have argued, and does not reflect the changes to the various bureaus and their duties over time.<sup>123</sup> A

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<sup>122</sup> Most of the studies on this topic have focused on the administration of the Circassian (Burjī) Mamluk dynasty. See Walther Björkman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten* (Hamburg: Friederichsen, De Gruyter and Co., m.b.H., 1928); H. L. Gottschalk, “Dīwān; ii. Egypt; (4) The Mamlūk period,” *EI2*; W. Björkman, “Diplomatic,” *EI2*; Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt, A.H. 564-741 A.D. 1169-1341* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Joseph H. Escovitz, “Vocational Patterns of the Scribes of the Mamlūk Chancery,” *Arabica* 23 (1976): 42-62; P. M. Holt, “A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt,” *English Historical Review* 101, (1986): 671-679; S. M. Imamuddin, “Dīwān al-Inshā’ (Chancery in Later Medieval Egypt), with Special Reference to Later Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Decrees Dated 528-894 H./1134-1489 A.C.,” *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 28, (1980): 63-77; Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration dans l’État militaire mamluk (IXe/XVe siècle)* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1992), especially 40-47 (*dīwān al-inshā’*), 47-49 (*dīwān al-jaysh*), 49-53 (*dīwān al-khāṣṣ*), 78-91 (means of access to the bureaucracy), 133-41 (the *kātib* between myth and reality), 142-77 (the clerks and the Mamluk state (142-77); 329-62 (the milieu of notables); Northrup, *Fram Slave to Sultan*, 200-242; Maaïke van Berkel, “A Well-Mannered Man of Letters or a Cunning Accountant: Al-Qalqashandī and the Historical Position of the Kātib,” *Al-Masāq* 13 (2001): 87-96; idem, “Ibn Khaldun, a Critical Historian at Work: The *Muqaddima* on Secretaries and Secretarial Writing,” in Oye, *Gentlemen: Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in Honour of Remke Kruk*, eds. A. Vrolijk and J. Hogendijk (Leiden: Brill 2007), 247-261.

<sup>123</sup> See van Berkel, “A Well-Mannered Man of Letters”: “[Regarding] the figure of the *kātib* himself, his background, education and social and cultural position, this rich administrative literature has its limitations. For the authors of these manuals and treatises intend to portray and idealized *kātib* whose merits, erudition and good manners are very often far removed from the historical *kātib* whose image is gleaned from historiographic, polemic and anecdotal

clearer picture of these institutions can be found in chronicles and biographical dictionaries, which reveal that the Mamluk administrative class was markedly different from the scribes under the Abbasids, to whom they are often compared. Like al-Nuwayrī, most Mamluk scribes

were not as devoted to the chancery [as their Abbasid forbears], although many of them were also famous for their literary abilities. They did not hesitate to work in other branches of the bureaucracy if an opportunity for advancement presented itself, even if it meant being an accountant...As for persons trained in the Islamic religious sciences, including those who would rise to become teachers and judges, even they sought employment in the *dīwān al-inshā'*, which, being concerned with neither law nor finances, was probably the most secular branch of government.”<sup>124</sup>

Al-Nuwayrī was as guilty as many of his contemporaries in advancing a romanticized portrait of the Mamluk scribes, but he makes up for these infidelities in an interesting way. In one of the largest chapters of the *Nihāya* (§2.5.14)—occupying over two volumes on its own—al-Nuwayrī provides a detailed discussion of “the scribes

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literature. Since famous *kuttāb* such as ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā, Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239) and al-Qalqashandī were well-versed *adīb*s (men of letters) and set great store to erudition, we are led to believe that all *kuttāb* were like them.” (88-89) See also Martel-Thoumian, 133-41.

<sup>124</sup> See Escovitz, “Vocational Patterns,” 62. Drawing upon biographical information from the *ṭabaqāt* literature of the fourteenth century, Joseph Escovitz attempted to determine what kind of educational backgrounds and professional experiences were commonly represented among Mamluk *kuttāb*, and particularly whether secretaries commonly had religious educations and were referred to as members of the ‘*ulamā*’. He limited his study to members of the *dīwān al-inshā'*, including the *kuttāb al-sirr*—the all-powerful private secretaries who served as the chief intelligence officers of the sultanate—as well as the lower-ranking clerks of the bench (*kuttāb al-dast*) and the clerks of the roll (*kuttāb al-darj*). Escovitz’s findings are striking. In the case of the private secretaries, nearly two thirds are identified as having had a religious education, and over one third held posts as “vocational ‘*ulamā*’” (e.g. *madrasa* instructors, judges, etc.) or *ḥadīth* transmitters. In summary, Escovitz suggested, “the *kuttāb al-sirr* were not a homogeneous caste of “men of the pen” drawn from a small number of scribal families, and devoted only to the smooth running of the Mamluk administration, but rather a heterogeneous group from diverse backgrounds, with strong and active ties to the religious institution.” With regard to the lesser-ranking scribes, a similar pattern is evident: over half of the individuals surveyed had a religious education.



and the eloquent ones” (*al-kuttāb wa ‘l-bulaghā*). This material is divided into five main sub-chapters, each one dealing with a different branch of secretaryship: the chancery (*kitābat al-inshā*); administrative and financial secretaryship (*kitābat al-dīwān wa-qalam al-taṣarruf*); legal secretaryship (*kitābat al-ḥukm wa-‘l-shurūt*); copying manuscripts (*kitābat al-naskh*); and the compilation of pedagogical texts (*kitābat al-ta‘līm*).

The majority of the chapter is occupied by the discussion of the chancery, most of which al-Nuwayrī copies from a slim work by his contemporary Ibn Fahd al-Ḥalabī (d. 725/1325) entitled *Ḥusn al-tawassul ilā šinā‘at al-tarassul* (‘The Proper Means to Arrive at the Craft of Letter Writing’).<sup>125</sup> This discussion centers on the education of the scribe and his cultivation of eloquence, a process which required the study of various materials, a kind of scribal curriculum. At the head of this curriculum, naturally, is the Qur’ān, which the scribe must memorize and make a part of his consciousness, such that the appropriate quotation—*l’āya juste*, so to speak—will leap to his mind spontaneously in the course of penning an epistle. Following the Qur’ān, the scribe should develop a mastery of: *ḥadīth* (particularly traditions dealing with historical events and legal issues); Arabic grammar (because all the eloquence in the world is useless if one makes a grammatical error); lexicography (to broaden one’s vocabulary); rhetoric; classical Arabic poetry (collected in anthologies like the *Ḥamāsa*, the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, the *Aṣma‘iyyāt*, etc.); proverbs; and constitutional and administrative law.

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<sup>125</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Thanā’ Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān b. Fahd al-Ḥalabī was the head of the chancery in Damascus. Al-Nuwayrī devotes a laudatory obituary to him (*Nihāya* 33:191, DK1: 33:145 ) in which he says, “were he called ‘The Scribe of East and West’, he would have deserved it.” See Ibn Fahd al-Ḥalabī, *Ḥusn al-tawassul ilā šinā‘at al-tarassul* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Amīn Afandī Hindiyā, 1897-98). Thomas Bauer points out: “This celebrated *munshi*’ was the venerated model for a whole generation of prose stylists. His proficiency in poetry and prose and his influence as head of the chancellery made him Ibn Nubātah’s most important acquaintance during his first years in Damascus.” (See idem, “Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī,” 16).

Of course, one should not neglect the famous battle-days of the ancient tribes, and political history, so as to be conversant with the stories of different rulers, the descendants of whom the scribe might one day have the privilege of writing letters to. On top of these “general subjects” (*umūr kulliyya*), a scribe can only improve his craft by attending to specialized subjects (*umūr khāṣṣa*) like the mastery of metaphor, simile, metonymy, allusion, paranomasia, and other literary figures.<sup>126</sup>

In the presentation of this scribal curriculum, al-Nuwayrī intervenes several times in his own voice to remind the reader that many of the topics deemed by Ibn Fahd to be essential to the formation of the chancery clerk are contained in the *Nihāya* itself.<sup>127</sup> The chapter, in other words, serves two important functions. On the one hand, it presents an overview of the kinds of knowledge pertaining specifically to chancery affairs. On the other hand, it gestures towards the rest of the *Nihāya*—the parts containing cosmological, political, literary, zoological, botanical, and historical information—and insists that these materials are not just relevant, but essential to the formation of the scribe. In this way, al-Nuwayrī portrays his book as a textual fulfillment of the encyclopaedic vision that Ibn Fahd articulates.

Had al-Nuwayrī ended Book II with this discussion of the chancery, our efforts to determine his motivations for producing the *Nihāya* would be complete. However,

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<sup>126</sup> See *Nihāya* 7:27-35 (DKI: 7:25-31). Mastery of the general topics is essential to the education of any scribe. Failure to do so would mean, as Ibn Fahd puts it, that the aspirant to this craft “would be in one valley, and secretaryship in another” (ibid., 7:35 [DKI: 7:31]).

<sup>127</sup> See also ibid., 7:212 (DKI 7:170), where al-Nuwayrī casually reminds his reader that, in addition to the material already presented, the scribe must also be familiar with different kinds of animals, plants, trees, geographic locales, etc., as he will be called upon to test this multifaceted knowledge in the service of his craft. All of these topics are presented in the *Nihāya*.

following the treatment of *kitābat al-inshā'*, al-Nuwayrī moves on to a discussion of financial administration, which turns nearly everything he said earlier on its head:

Let us now discuss that which relates to financial administration. While we previously discussed the chancery clerks, their importance and prestige, nobility and eminence, eloquence and gracefulness, righteousness and munificence...and many other praiseworthy attributes... well, the financial clerks are even more precise (*akthar taḥqīqan*), and more involved in the organization of funds (*aqrab ilā ḍabṭ al-amwāl ṭarīqan*), and more cogent in their proofs (*adall burhānan*), and clearer in their explanations (*awḍaḥ bayānan*). God Almighty said in His Book: "...that you may know the number of the years, and the reckoning (*ḥisāb*), and everything We have distinguished very distinctly" (Qur'ān 17:12).<sup>128</sup> And one of the interpreters of the Qur'ān suggested that when God reported what Yūsuf said – "Set me over the store-houses of the land; I am a knowing guardian (*ḥafīẓ amīn*)" (Qur'ān 12:55) – what He meant was, "a financial clerk" (*kātib ḥāsib*)<sup>129</sup>... By way of the financial clerks, money is preserved and profits are calculated, the laws of countries are fixed (*tuḥadd qawānīn al-bilād*), and new possessions are distinguished from inherited ones (*tumayyaz al-ṭawārīf min al-tilād*). The chancery clerks cannot boast of a virtue without [the financial clerks] boasting of many virtues. For every high rank they ascend to, the others ascend to multiple ranks. For every epistle they distinguish themselves with, the others supersede them in that as well. For every official secret they keep, the others keep one as well... Furthermore, the financial clerks have been given duties that the chancery clerks have been prevented from undertaking, and their pens have written on issues that the others' have been forbidden from writing on... We do not measure them against each other by way of competition or exaggeration or boasting, but every group has a virtue that cannot be denied...<sup>130</sup>

For such a reserved and conservative compiler as al-Nuwayrī, this comment is about as energetic an intervention as one could expect to encounter. There is a streak of revanchism in his tone, a stridency that betrays the chip on his shoulder perhaps

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<sup>128</sup> This Qur'ānic citation is presumably deemed relevant to the current discussion because of the word *ḥisāb* (reckoning) in it.

<sup>129</sup> The license to read Yūsuf's statement as a reference to financial secretaryship is connected with the terms *khazā'in al-arḍ* (the store-houses of the land), which have an echo in the term for financial treasury (*khizāna*).

<sup>130</sup> *Nihāya*, 8:191-93 (DKI: 8:145-46).

acquired as a clerk in the upstart *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*, which was reaching the apogee of its influence at the time he worked there and yet was still not as prestigious an institution as the venerable (but by now far less influential) chancery. The invocation of two verses from the Qur’ān (and some *ḥadīth* traditions which I have not translated) also reveals the corporatist identity of the financial clerks, who claimed the prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) as an illustrious predecessor. Several decades later, al-Qalqashandī would forcefully argue the opposite case, declaring his allegiance to the chancery and depicting the financial clerks as number-crunching rubes.<sup>131</sup> He writes in the preface to his *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*:

[Egypt] possesses such superior clerks as no other kingdom or city, and it gathers together such men of excellence and cultivation (*ahl al-faḍl wa-‘l-adab*) as had never been gathered in any country. And it continues to be crowned by those cultivated people, both young and old, and adorned by the most excellent clerks...

نجوم سماء كلما غاب كوكبٌ      بدا كوكبٌ تأوي إليه كواكبُه

*Like stars in the sky, as each star passes on  
Another appears for the stars to cluster around*<sup>132</sup>

<sup>131</sup> See Van Berkel, “A Well-Mannered Man of Letters”: “Noteworthy is al-Qalqashandī’s emphasis throughout his text on the social, intellectual, and even moral superiority of the chancery clerk over his colleagues in the other *dīwāns*, especially over the financial *kuttāb*. Wise men and famous predecessors, al-Qalqashandī argues, have generally agreed that the position of chancery clerk is more noble than that of the financial clerk. Apart from being skilled in eloquence, the chancery clerk requires knowledge of other kinds of secretaryship in order to compose documents concerning legal and financial procedures. The work of the financial *kātib*, on the other hand, is only confined to the standard models and descriptions of the financial administration.” (92)

<sup>132</sup> Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 1:6.

In this verse, the night sky is a metaphor for Egypt, a place of refuge for all of the luminous stars (scholars and men of culture, ‘*ulamā*’ and *udabā*’) of the Muslim firmament, who are replaced over the generations by new rising stars. Al-Qalqashandī views the Mamluk chancery scribes as the latest and greatest—even greater than the Abbasid scribes before them—who should not fall victim to servile imitation:

The imitator (*al-muqallid*) is not characterized by independent thinking (*ijtihād*). What a difference between he who knows a ruling based upon evidence (*dalīl*), and he who is inflexible in his imitation, [proceeding] with absolute certainty.

ولم أر في عيوب الناس شيئاً      كنقص القادرين على التمام

*Of all the faults I’ve ever seen, there’s nothing worse  
Than when those capable of perfection fall short*<sup>133</sup>

Al-Nuwayrī saw things differently, as a result of his experiences in the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*. From 1302 to 1310, he oversaw several of the sultan’s most important properties across the Mamluk realms. Donald Little writes that the head of this office (the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*, and presumably his antecedent in the person of Ibn ‘Ubāda) was “the sultan’s personal agency responsible for providing funds required for such things as construction (both his own and that of his amirs); the *ḥajj* (his own and his family’s); celebrations (for the marriages of his children, for example, and the birth of children); gifts; hunting expeditions; robes of honor; uniforms for the Royal Mamluks; food for the court; slave-girls; horses; plus routine expenses of the sultan and his family.”<sup>134</sup> In

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 1:8.

<sup>134</sup> Little, “Notes on the early *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*,” 247-48. Bernadette Martel-Thoumian describes this position as being responsible for furnishing arms for military expeditions; animals for sacrifice at feasts; clothes for the Mamluks and robes of honor; the content of the private treasury, its wardrobe, etc. The *nāẓir* had several employees (a *mustawfī*, some *shuhūd*, *kuttāb*, and a deputy).

his capacity as Ibn ‘Ubāda’s deputy, al-Nuwayrī would have been responsible less for the kinds of duties romantically associated with the chancery (laboring over a *recherché* pun, translating a letter into an exotic language, etc.) but rather some combination of financial accounting, intelligence gathering, legal arbitration, property surveying, diplomacy and negotiation, and what we refer to prosaically these days as general management (*mubāshara*). Having made his case for the superiority of the financial clerks over the chancery scribes, al-Nuwayrī goes on:

When I arrived, in this book of mine, to the chapter on secretaryship, I wanted to pass over the issue of financial secretaryship and limit myself to the discussion of the chancery, in the custom of those who had written on this subject. But a friend asked me to include a useful summary here that the financial manager (*mubāshir*) would learn from... So I presented this small sampling by way of responding to his request and fulfilling his hopes. My discussion of the craft of secretaryship is only a drop in the ocean, a tiny fragment of what the novice must know... And when I wrote what I did about this craft, I had yet to come across a single book or page on this subject... such that I could use it as a model and follow its path... Indeed, I found the door to this subject locked, its curtain lowered...<sup>135</sup>

As a *mubāshir* of sultanic properties in the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ*, al-Nuwayrī sat at the center of a vast network of officials, merchants, and private individuals connected to the affairs of al-Nāṣir’s government: jurists, *ḥadīth* instructors, Qur’ān reciters, and students in the large collegiate mosques; surgeons, bone-setters, oculists, and their patients in the various hospitals around Cairo; sugar producers, traders, and agriculturalists; Mamluk amirs and their retinues; judges, provincial governors, Sufi

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According to some chancery manuals, the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* in Syria had the same organization as the one in Egypt, and existed in Damascus (where al-Nuwayrī was stationed in 1302) and Aleppo. See Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration dans l’État militaire mamluk*, 49-53.

<sup>135</sup> *Nihāya* 8:193 (DKI: 8:146).

shaykhs, army officers, and more, all associated in some way or another with a rapidly growing and consolidating imperial state. Managing these interests effectively on behalf of the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* required functional fluency in a wide range of discourses, a sentiment that comes across strongly in al-Nuwayrī's chapter on scribal practice. Such fluency would not have been required of every clerk, but the culture of the elite might accurately be characterized as cosmopolitan and intellectually omnivorous in its outlook.<sup>136</sup> This is evidenced by the impression that Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī made on al-Ṣafadī, in the latter's description of him in *A'yān al-ʿaṣr*:

He was one of the perfect litterateurs of my acquaintanceship; by perfection I mean those who applied themselves to literature in theory and practice, in prose and poetry, and in knowledge of the lives of the people of their age as well as those who preceded them—people of all classes... One day he digressed on *qāḍīs* and proceeded to mention the four *qāḍīs* of his time in Egypt and Syria with the names, honorifics, and characteristic features of every one of them, so that I could barely control my wonder.<sup>137</sup>

In this context, the blanket characterization of the *Nihāya* as a scribal manual misses the mark, despite al-Nuwayrī's portrayal of the scribe in the first part of his chapter on secretaryship as a kind of walking encyclopaedia. The second half of the chapter—which he wrote himself and did not copy from another source—presents a more honest and authentic portrait. Most Mamluk scribes (even the elite ones) likely

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<sup>136</sup> See Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l'administration*, who shows that while every clerk was supposed to be ethical, pious, well-spoken, a good calligrapher, knowledgeable about administrative regulation, mathematics, etc., most were little more than glorified copyists (134-41).

<sup>137</sup> Donald Little, "Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of his Contemporaries," in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald P. Little (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 203.

spent far more time drafting promissory notes,<sup>138</sup> executing transfers of property,<sup>139</sup> and voiding illegitimate sales transactions<sup>140</sup> than they did composing exquisite epistles dripping with learned references to the nesting habits of flamingoes<sup>141</sup> or the rituals of moon-worshipping cults.<sup>142</sup> While all of this information could be found in the *Nihāya*, a very small fraction of it was directly relevant to al-Nuwayrī's professional duties. The vast majority of material contained would have been as useful to the average Mamluk scribe as the libretto of Gilbert & Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* would have been to the captain of a 19<sup>th</sup> century British warship. As I argue in Chapter 4, the *Nihāya*'s contents are a reflection of culture rather than practice. They display the intellectual and literary horizons of the learned elite (in which an encyclopaedic range of interests was a desideratum), rather than the narrow practice of the scribes (which was more relevant to al-Nuwayrī's obsessive attention to itemization and structural hierarchy, as I show in Chapter 3).

This is not to say that administration had a negligible impact on al-Nuwayrī's project. In fact, its impact was significant, but circumstantially and indirectly so. Secretaryship was, as he writes in the preface to the *Nihāya*, "the branch in whose shade [he] reposed," the source of his access to some of the most influential political figures, religious authorities, and litterateurs of his age. He gained from these bureaucratic

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<sup>138</sup> *Nihāya*, 9:17 (DKI: 9:16).

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:23-24 (DKI: 9:21-22).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:73-74 (DKI: 9:49-50).

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:237 (DKI: 10:145).

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:57 (DKI 1:50-51).



experiences the opportunity to travel around the Mamluk realms, a cultivation of his natural talent for systematization and book-keeping, and an immersion in a world of institutionalized education and scholarship. These elements were centrally important to the conceptual boundaries of the *Nihāya*, the way that al-Nuwayrī organized it, and the types of materials that prevail within it.

### **The Nāṣiriyya Madrasa & Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī**

Between 1298 and 1341, over 500 structures were built or renovated across the empire, including some of the most important monuments of Mamluk Cairo.<sup>143</sup> Many of these structures were educational institutions—madrasas, Sufi lodges, *ḥadīth* instruction schools, etc.—among the most visible of which was the madrasa bearing the sultan’s name, the Nāṣiriyya, where al-Nuwayrī lived and probably composed the *Nihāya*. Most of the hundreds of madrasas in 14<sup>th</sup>-century Egypt and Syria were funded through the patronage of the Mamluk political elite, with some established by wealthy merchants and scholars.<sup>144</sup> The reasons for the emergence of such a widely patronized and

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<sup>143</sup> Philipp Speiser, “The Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Madrasah in Cairo: Restoration and Archeological Investigation,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 12.2 (2008), 197. See also Viktoria Meinecke-Berg, “Quellen zur Topographie und Baugeschichte in Kairo unter Sultan an-Nasir Muhammad b. Qala’un,” in *XIX. Deutscher Orientalistentag, vom 28. September bis 4. Oktober 1975 in Freiburg im Breisgau*, ed. W. Voigt, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* Suppl. 3, no. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1977), 538–50.

<sup>144</sup> Mahmood Ibrahim argues that “by the middle of the fourteenth century there were nearly a hundred madrasahs in Damascus, large and small. Al-Nu’aymī (d. 978/1570) lists 152 madrasahs in Damascus, other than the 500 or so mosques and the numerous *ribāts* and *khānqāhs*, where instruction, usually of a Sufi orientation, also took place. The greater majority of these institutions were founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That the institution had become so ubiquitous in the Islamic world is indicated by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), who lists 73 madrasahs on the Cairo street known as Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, the site of the old Fatimid palace.” See Mahmood Ibrahim, “Practice and Reform in Fourteenth-Century Damascene Madrasahs,” 78–79.

institutionalized scholastic enterprise at this historical juncture are the subject of debate.<sup>145</sup> Some have argued that the Mamluks supported the ‘*ulamā*’ as a strategy of political co-optation in order to gain legitimacy as the leaders of the Sunnī world. Others suggest that the impetus was not political but economic: pious endowments functioned as tax shelters and effective mechanisms to pass wealth on to one’s descendants.<sup>146</sup> Given the number of educational institutions constructed even during al-Nuwayrī’s lifetime (which included *ribāṭs*, Sufi *khānqāhs*, and *dār al-ḥadīths*, in addition to madrasas) it is reasonable to suppose that a variety of factors were behind the boom.

The impact that these institutions had upon the transmission of knowledge is also a point of considerable disagreement. Jonathan Berkey has made the case for “the

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<sup>145</sup> The study of the madrasa’s historical development was pioneered by the late George Makdisi, who showed that the first institutional locus of instruction in the Islamic sciences was the mosque (*masjid*). Over time, mosques became centers for jurisprudential activity as Muslims sought to connect their study of scripture and tradition with the legal and social questions facing their polities. The turning point for the mosque as an educational space occurred in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century when the demand for such legal instruction grew, prompting the building of larger mosques with attached inns (*khāns*) for out-of-town students and teachers. The final step in the development of the madrasa took place in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was marked by the combination of the duties of the *masjid* and the *khān* in a single institution under a single endowment (*waqf*). See George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); see also idem, “Madrasa,” *EI2*. On the phenomenon of *waqf*, see Henry Cattān, “The Law of Waqf,” in *Law in the Middle East*, edited by Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny (Washington DC: Middle East Institute, 1955): 203-222; W. Heffening, “Wakf,” *EI1*; Muhammad Amin, *al-Awqāf wa-’l-ḥayāt al-ijtimā’iyya fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dar al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya, 1980); idem, *Catalogue des documents d’archives du Caire de 239/853 à 922/1516* (Cairo: Institut d’archéologie orientale, 1981); Carl F. Petry, “A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamluk Period,” *The Muslim World* 63 (1983): 182-207; Jonathan P. Berkey, “Mamluks and the World of Higher Islamic Education in Medieval Cairo, 1250-1517.”

<sup>146</sup> For different views on this question see Yaacov Lev, “Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 13.1 (2009): 1-26; Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Carl F. Petry, “Scholarly Stasis in Medieval Islam Reconsidered: Mamluk Patronage in Cairo,” *Poetics Today* 14.2 (Summer 1993): 323-348; Berkey, “Mamluks and the World of Higher Islamic Education”; Petry, “A Paradox of Patronage”.

persistent informality of Islamic education,” arguing that even during the heyday of the madrasa in the Mamluk period, education remained a largely personal and flexible affair.<sup>147</sup> Carl Petry has suggested that Berkey’s claims do not take into account evidence from biographical dictionaries demonstrating that academic institutions—not just individuals—held considerable cachet in the world of Mamluk higher learning.<sup>148</sup> The salience of institutional prestige and identity, Petry says, is demonstrable in the biographical literature: certain institutions are cited more often than others, and were magnets for students seeking certain types of instruction.

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<sup>147</sup> “[The] standards by which an education was measured remained informal and personal. No system of institutional degrees was ever established; rather, the ulama sought to control the transmission of knowledge through the personal attestation that a person had acquired command of (or at least exposure to) a text or a body of knowledge. That attestation, usually in the form of an *ijāzah*, could only be given by an individual who was himself already recognized as an authority over the text. Consequently, the regulation of the transmission of knowledge, and also of access to ulama status, depended on a variety of mechanisms by which those personal relationships linking one authority to another, and linking teacher to student, were identified, recorded, and published to the wider community. This was the public face of what was otherwise a very private matter (that is, the acquisition of knowledge)...” (Jonathan P. Berkey, “Al-Subkī and His Women,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 14.1 (2010), 4-5.) See also idem, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*; idem, “Tadrīs,” *EI2*; idem, “Culture and Society during the Late Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 375-411. Daphna Ephrat has similarly argued that in 11<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad, madrasas played a less vital role in the formation of ‘*ulamā*’ identity than the *ḥalqa*, the traditional locus of Islamic education; see idem, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni ‘ulamā’ of eleventh-century Baghdad* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).

<sup>148</sup> “The patterns of references to educational sites, occupational positions, and social ties to members of the military and civilian elites discussed here at the very least qualify [Berkey’s] assertion. A distinct set of religio-academic institutions stood out as the premier venues of higher learning in Mamluk Cairo. These profiles collectively depicted the relative degrees of eminence and status achieved by their staffs. The question remains as to whether these staffs actually identified with their venues as formal faculties tied to the institutions that employed them. The patterns certainly suggest that these scholars were aware of the advantages such employment in prominent—and wealthy—foundations would grant them.” (Carl F. Petry, “Educational Institutions as Depicted in the Biographical Literature of Mamluk Cairo: The Debate Over Prestige and Venue,” *Medieval Prosopography* 23 (2002): 114-15.)

This debate about the informality of Islamic education will continue to be shaped by emerging insights about pedagogical genres, the commentary literature, etc., but it is generally accepted that the construction of educational institutions during this period had a profound impact upon the social context of scholarship, even if the private interaction between a student and teacher remained informal. In many cases, substantial budgets were allocated for the upkeep of educational facilities, residences for students and instructors, and full-time staff members such as gardeners and manuscript copyists. A large madrasa with a hefty endowment might boast a librarian (*khāzin al-kutub*) to oversee the school's private collection of manuscripts.<sup>149</sup>

One such madrasa was the Nāṣiriyya, which played an important role in al-Nuwayrī's personal life and professional career. Al-Nuwayrī came to live in the Nāṣiriyya madrasa shortly after it opened in the year 703 AH (1303-4 CE), and may have remained resident there (apart from the few years he spent in Syria) until the end of his life.<sup>150</sup> This was the first major structure associated with the sultan al-Nāṣir, and the first cruciform madrasa in Egypt with a separate lecture hall (*īwān*, pl. *awāwīn*) reserved for each of the four major Sunni law schools (see figures below).<sup>151</sup> The construction of

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<sup>149</sup> Petry, Carl F.. "Some Observations on the Position of the Librarian in the Scholarly Establishment of Cairo during the Later Middle Ages; Data Yielded by Contemporary Biographical Sources." *MELA Notes* no. 2, (April 1974), 17.

<sup>150</sup> As noted by Jamāl al-Dīn, the dream that al-Nuwayrī has in 730 AH is set at the Nāṣiriyya, which may indicate that he was living there at the end of his life. See Jamāl al-Dīn, *Nuwayrī*, 29-30; *Nihāya* 33:216.

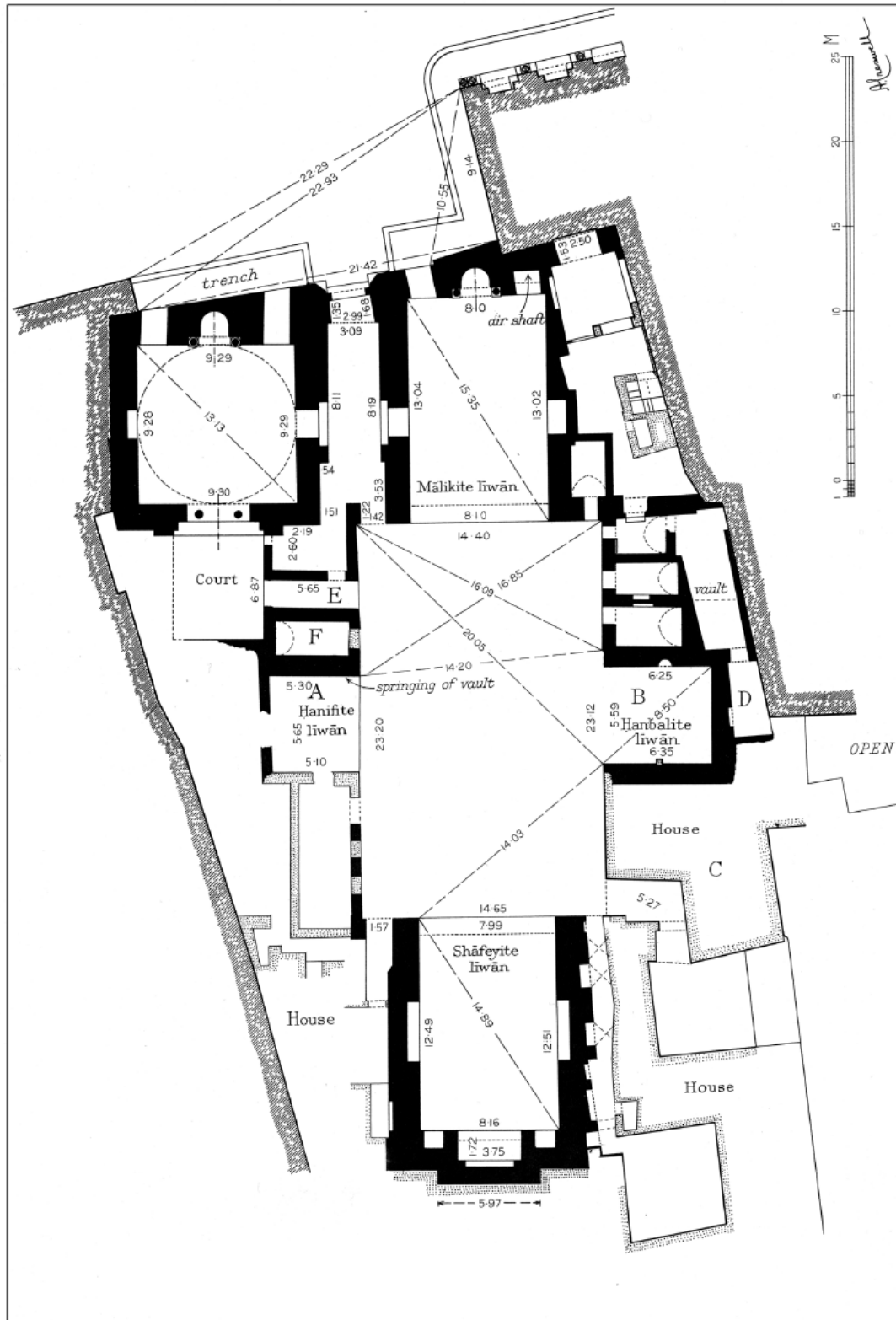
<sup>151</sup> K. A. C. Creswell *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), 2:234-40, fig. 137 and pls. 85-89a, 111c, and 124d; Philipp Speiser, "The Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Madrasah in Cairo," 197; Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)* (Glückstadt : Verlag J.J. Augustin, 1992), 88; Philipp Speiser, "Restaurierungsarbeiten an der al-Nasriyya Madrasa in Kairo," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* Suppl. 10 (1994): 527-40, pls. 1-4 and figs. 1-2; Wolfgang Mayer, Giorgio Nogara, and Philipp Speiser, "Archäologische Untersuchungen und Restaurierungsarbeiten an der Madrasa des

the madrasa and the attached mausoleum (*qubba*) was begun sometime between 1294 and 1296 by Sultan al-ʿĀdil Kitbugha, who was deposed before it was complete. When al-Nāṣir came to power for the second time in 1298, the Mālikī chief judge Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Makhlūf persuaded him to purchase the property and endow it as an important college of law.

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Sultan an-Nasir Muhammad," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 57 (2001): 219–38, pls. 32–37.

Figure 3: Ground Plan of Nāṣiriyya Madrasa<sup>152</sup>



<sup>152</sup> Plan appeared in K.A.C. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, vol. 2 fig. 137. Used with permission.

Figure 4: Restoration of the Nāṣiriyya Madrasa<sup>153</sup>



<sup>153</sup> Image by Philipp Speiser; appeared in idem, "The Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Madrasah in Cairo," 216, fig. 10. Used with the permission of the author and the *Mamluk Studies Review*.

Higher education in the Mamluk Empire was a lucrative business for scholars and administrators with enough clout to secure stipends for themselves and their descendants. No sooner had al-Nāṣir agreed to purchase Kitbugha's madrasa than the new institution became the object of double-dealing and spiteful politicking at the highest levels of government. Al-Nuwayrī provides a behind-the-scenes peek at the triangulation that preceded the madrasa's investiture, in Book V of the *Nihāya*:

The chief judge Zayn al-Dīn had prepared the endowment deed, giving himself control over the school and the mausoleum for the rest of his life, then passing control onto his children and their descendants, and then finally to the [future] Mālikī chief judge. He also stipulated that the teaching in the Mālikī *īwān* would fall to himself and his children... This disturbed Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Ubāda, who had been brought into al-Nāṣir's *dīwān* as an inspector (*mushārif*) by Zayn al-Dīn. So Ibn 'Ubāda went to the sultan and explained the details of the endowment to him, and said: "The chief judge has done this for himself, his children, and their descendants, and he hasn't left anything for the sultan and his freed slaves (*'utaqā'*).” He suggested to the sultan that he change the endowment deed and place financial control in the hands of his freedman, the eunuch Shujā' al-Dīn 'Anbar al-Lālā, and after him to other respectable members of the sultan's former slaves, then to the slaves of his father [the late sultan Qalāwūn]. This the sultan did... voiding the previous deed and executing the second one.<sup>154</sup>

The official who torpedoed the chief judge's designs on the Nāṣiriyya was the same Ibn 'Ubāda who supported al-Nuwayrī's promotion in the Nāṣirī *dīwān* a few years later but then had him flogged for insubordination. When al-Nuwayrī asked him why he circumvented Ibn Makhlūf's plan, Ibn 'Ubāda reportedly responded candidly: "He gave control and teaching privileges to himself and his children after him, and didn't give me a share. Nor did he give me a job, even though I had asked that he make me an

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<sup>154</sup> *Nihāya*, 32:62 (DKI: 32:42-43).



inspector as part of the donor's conditions. He was stingy at my expense..."<sup>155</sup> Given the bad blood between the two men, al-Nuwayrī's account of this should be treated with care. On the other hand, it may explain the reason for his eventual insubordination, which led to the flogging.<sup>156</sup>

After discussing the politicking behind the establishment of the Nāṣiriyya, al-Nuwayrī provides a summary of its endowment document (*kitāb al-waqf*), which came to light in 1324 after the death of the school's administrator.<sup>157</sup> The document and accompanying commentary provide a detailed description of the Nāṣiriyya's mission, expenditures, funding sources, staff, and architectural features. Al-Nuwayrī also describes his rationale for including it:

I thought it necessary to provide a summary of the endowment deed for the school and the mausoleum... And what led me to do so in this book—despite the length [of the deed] and its departure from the historical theme—are the similar cases in which other old endowment deeds have been concealed after the pledge to uphold their conditions, and financial supervisors and overseers have traded them between each other and taken control of the endowments and changed their expenditures against the conditions of their donors... Secondly, what led me to do this was what happened in this very school from the outset, despite the fact that its donor [i.e. Sultan al-Nāṣir] was alive—may God immortalize his reign—and despite the need to supervise it and appoint chief judges and great scholars, nobles, and jurists to teach in it, there were still many cases of violations against the donor's conditions. The overseer did not fulfill the donor's stipulations, despite the availability of funds well beyond the requirements of the stipulations. This all became apparent after the death of the financial controller—the eunuch Shujā' al-Dīn, in the year 724 AH—when the endowment deed emerged. It is possible that the abovementioned controller did

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 32:62 (DKI: 32:43).

<sup>156</sup> This event also reveals the extent of the powers of the *wakīl al-khāṣṣ*, who was capable of circumventing the wishes of a powerful chief judge, who had held office for decades. Ibn 'Ubāda's powers were a foreshadowing of the tremendous authority that his successor Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr would wield as *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 32:64-74 (DKI: 32:44-51); 33:75-76 (DKI: 33:58).

not do this willfully after having inspected the conditions, but rather out of disregard and neglect and ignorance, and a lack of scrutiny over that which was entrusted to him.<sup>158</sup>

If the corruption that tainted the Nāṣiriyya's affairs for its first few decades underscores the extent to which formal legal structures were easily circumvented by the strongmen of the Mamluk political and administrative elite, al-Nuwayrī's indignation on behalf of the aggrieved educators indicates that such structures were also taken seriously by the 'ulamā'. The sorting out of the Nāṣiriyya's finances was part of a broader movement of educational reform under the sultan. As Mahmood Ibrahim has shown, the madrasas of Syria were audited during this period in order to root out financial abuses.<sup>159</sup> In one case, officials discovered that a Damascene madrasa had 190 jurists on its payroll despite a stipulation in the deed document that it could only employ 20. When 130 were dismissed as a compromise, the sources report considerable

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 32:63 (DKI: 32:43). In the following volume, al-Nuwayrī returns to the subject of the Nāṣiriyya's finances in his obituary for the madrasas's negligent overseer, a man he describes as wicked and greedy: "When he took over the Nāṣiriyya, he prevented any inspectors from examining its deed, and he did not follow the conditions of its founder, giving the jurists and the teaching assistants half of what was earmarked for them in the deed. When he died and control was passed on to the sultan's governor Sayf al-Dīn Arghun al-Nāṣirī, he made the deed public, carried out what the sultan had stipulated, increased the number of jurists, and doubled their stipends, may God reward him." (Ibid., 33:76, DKI: 33:59)

<sup>159</sup> "A *marsūm* [decree] arrived in Damascus in early Dhū al-Ḥijjah 727. Shortly thereafter, on Friday, 6 Dhū al-Ḥijjah, the governor assembled the four chief judges, other teachers, and Sufis, and had the sultan's letter read to the gathering. The letter asked that the deed document (*waqfiyah*) of each madrasah, inside and outside of the Damascus city walls, must be examined to make sure that the madrasah functioned exactly as stipulated in the document. Anyone who did not meet the qualifications (*shurūṭ*) stipulated by the benefactor must be dismissed. Only those who met the stipulations, including those who held non-teaching positions, could be retained. A "committee" made up of the four chief judges, the treasurer (*wakīl bayt al-māl*), the supervisor and the inspector of the endowments (*nāẓir al-awqāf wa-mushidduhā*), the accounts controller (*mustawfi*), and a group of *fuqahā'* and teachers began a systematic reading of all the *waqfiyahs*, an activity that took place everyday between the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer until the month of Ṣafar the following year (nearly the two months of Dhū al-Ḥijjah and Muḥarram)." (Ibrahim, "Practice and Reform, 81)

consternation on behalf of the teaching staff. In the case of the Nāṣiriyya, the reform process involved hiring more jurists and doubling their salaries, as stipulated in the original deed. The table below contains a list of the Nāṣiriyya's expenses.

**Table 3: The Budget of the Nāṣiriyya Madrasa<sup>160</sup>**

<i>Monthly Expenses</i>	<i>Cost (in dirhams)</i>
Stipend for the supervisor ( <i>nāzir</i> )	300
Mausoleum's imam	80
Shaykh al-ḥadīth	30
Mausoleum's Qur'ān reciters	25
Public visitors to the mausoleum	500
Eight muezzins (two senior, six junior)	230
Two custodians for the mausoleum	58
Three upholsterers <sup>161</sup>	161
Four servants from among the freedmen of al-Nāṣir	160
Mausoleum gatekeeper	20
Funds for olive oil, candles, sundries, plates, glasses, cups, etc.	N/A
Professors, teaching assistants, and students <sup>162</sup>	4000
Madrasa imam	80
Four custodians for madrasa	100
Librarian	30
Gatekeeper for madrasa	30
Cattle-driver <sup>163</sup>	30
<b>Total monthly expenses</b>	<b>&gt; 5834 dirhams</b>
<b>Monthly endowment</b>	<b>ca. 8942 dirhams<sup>164</sup></b>

<sup>160</sup> See *Nihāya* 32:60-74 (DKI: 32:41-52).

<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, one of the upholsterers is specifically mentioned by name (al-Ḥājī Ṣabīḥ al-Quṭbī), suggesting that he may have had a personal relationship with the author of the endowment deed.

<sup>162</sup> This line item is listed in the deed as 1000 dirhams per month for each professor, his staff of clerks and teaching assistants (*mu'īd, dā'ī, naqīb*), and his students. As discussed above, the Nāṣiriyya had at least four main professors, one for each school of law (and the initial appointees are specified in the *waqf* document). The professor earned 200 *dirhams* per month, and the clerks and students divided the remaining 800 *dirhams*.

<sup>163</sup> The cattle-driver was in charge of the ox that ran the waterwheel that brought water to the madrasas's courtyard, fountain, garden, etc.

<sup>164</sup> This figure is based on a list of revenue sources assigned to the Nāṣiriyya's *waqf*, among them the Qaysariyyat Amīr (1,659 *dirhams* per month), the adjoining hall (48 *dirhams*), a famous *khān* in Damascus (earning 70,000 *dirhams* per year, al-Nāṣir's share of which was around 4,000 *dirhams* per month), etc. See *Nihāya* 32:70 (DKI: 32:50).

The descriptions of duties attached to each of the line items above paint a picture of the Nāṣiriyya as a bustling intellectual community. A century after al-Nuwayrī lived there al-Maqrīzī could still describe it as a glorious madrasa with an important history, whose luster was just starting to fade.<sup>165</sup> Students, professors, teaching assistants, and prayer leaders boarded at the school, which was maintained by a sizable custodial staff. The attached mausoleum was a place open to visitation by the public, while the gatekeepers ensured that the halls of the school itself were reserved for daily study. Professors were under strict orders to meet with students and attend to their requests for clarification in their lessons, and the librarian guarded the school's collection of books and was required to make certain that they did not leave the building. The presence of students and teachers from all four schools of law likely made for a stimulating educational space, and one which played a role in some of the leading religious controversies of the day.<sup>166</sup>

Madrasas like the Nāṣiriyya were producers and consumers of a range and quantity of books unsurpassed in medieval Islamic history. As Carl Petry has shown, these institutions generated copious numbers of “texts, treatises, commentaries, handbooks, and primers for curricular use,” in such disciplines as “the Koranic sciences, Prophetic traditions, jurisprudence, grammar, rhetoric, literature, geography,

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<sup>165</sup> See Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 2:234.

<sup>166</sup> See *Nihāya* 32:99 (DKI: 32:71) for an account of the meeting that al-Nuwayrī convened in his room at the Nāṣiriyya in 705 AH, bringing together several leading scholars to discuss Ibn Taymiyya's writings on the names and attributes of God. The meeting led to Ibn Taymiyya being summoned to Cairo to explain his views. See Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 57-58; Donald Little, “The historical and historiographical significance of the detention of Ibn Taymiyya” *IJMES* 4 (1973), 315.

history, philosophy/logic, mathematics, and the natural sciences.”<sup>167</sup> Having visited Cairo and marveled at its universe of scholarly institutions, the historian Ibn Khaldūn opined that so many books had been written in so many fields that scholars could scarcely hope to master all of the texts within their own narrow specialties. The solution to this dilemma, he grudgingly accepted, was the production of even more books—abridgements, epitomes, commentaries, and compendia—to help the novice wend his way through the great forest of specialized treatises.<sup>168</sup> The trope of an overabundance of books is one that is common to many intellectual traditions and historical epochs, and the Mamluk period is no exception.<sup>169</sup> During Ibn Khaldūn’s

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<sup>167</sup> “A survey of texts mastered by individuals departing from the college (madrasa) whom al-Sakhāwī described as qualified for teaching, in his biographical dictionary of Cairene notables active during the ninth/fifteenth century ... revealed more than 1,100 items.” See Petry, “Scholarly Stasis,” 323-24.

<sup>168</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 3:288-91. Carl Petry reports that “a survey of texts mastered by individuals departing from the college (madrasa) whom [the 15<sup>th</sup> century Mamluk scholar] al-Sakhāwī described as qualified for teaching...revealed more than 1,100 items,” including texts on “the Koranic sciences, Prophetic traditions, jurisprudence, grammar, rhetoric, literature, geography, history, philosophy/logic, mathematics, and the natural sciences.” See Carl F. Petry, “Scholarly Stasis in Medieval Islam Reconsidered: Mamluk Patronage in Cairo,” *Poetics Today* 14.2 (Summer 1993), 323-324. Along similar lines, al-Nuwayrī reports that a fire that broke out in the year 681 AH in Damascus consumed the booksellers’ market, and some 15,000 volumes belonging to Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī were burned, not including quires and loose folios (*Nihāya*, 31:59).

<sup>169</sup> For a discussion of this trope as it appears throughout classical Arabic literature and historiography, see Franz Rosenthal, “Of Making Many Books There is No End: The Classical Muslim View,” in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1995), 33-55. For approaches to dealing with textual overabundance in the European context, see Ann Blair, “Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64.1 (Jan 2003): 11-28; Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

lifetime alone (1332-1406) all three texts of the Mamluk encyclopaedic triumvirate would be compiled, along with thousands of other compilatory works.<sup>170</sup>

The increasingly corporate character of the scholarly class and its institutional environment is also evidenced by the great number of biographical dictionaries written in the Mamluk period. As the study of law became an important form of preparatory training for aspirants to the ranks of the civilian-intellectual elite, a situation obtained whereby the political and religious establishments became mutually reinforcing, with the state patronizing the scholarly activities of the *‘ulamā’* in exchange for their bureaucratic services.<sup>171</sup> The proliferation of biographical dictionaries did not only occur among jurists, but in other professions as well, from grammarians to exegetes to *ḥadīth* transmitters. The Mamluk period also witnessed the first biographical dictionaries arranged by century, beginning with Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s (d. 852/1449) *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mī’a al-thāmina*, a five-volume onomasticon of the 1300’s. As Wadad al-Qadi has argued, the production of biographical dictionaries marked an important development in the self-consciousness of the scholarly class. Not merely lists of names, these works rather presented an “alternative history” of the Muslim

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<sup>170</sup> Al-Nuwayrī completed the *Nihāya* during the year after Ibn Khaldūn’s birth, and al-Qalqashandī had likely just started work on his *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā* by the time Ibn Khaldūn died. Al-‘Umarī’s text was compiled entirely during the period of Ibn Khaldūn’s life.

<sup>171</sup> Maaïke van Berkel, “A Well-Mannered Man of Letters or a Cunning Accountant: Al-Qalqashandī and the Historical Position of the Kātib,” *Al-Masāq* 13 (2001), 92. See also Joan E. Gilbert, “Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalism of the *‘Ulamā’* in Medieval Damascus,” *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980): 105-34.

community, written by scholars *for* scholars, as opposed to the chronicle, which was primarily written by scholars for rulers.<sup>172</sup>

The Nāṣiriyya was part of a larger “collegiate cluster” in the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn area of Cairo, which included several other madrasas.<sup>173</sup> A single population of students and scholars circulated among these institutions, and the teaching of law and the religious sciences was not meaningfully segregated from instruction in other disciplines. As Mahmood Ibrahim has shown, “subjects such as medicine were taught alongside the religious sciences, often by the same individuals.”<sup>174</sup> At the same time that he moved into the Nāṣiriyya, al-Nuwayrī was put in charge of the neighboring Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī, a famous hospital built by Sultan Qalāwūn, the father of al-Nāṣir. It was among the most impressive structures of the Mamlūk period, containing treatment rooms, educational spaces, laboratories, running water, baths, and a school

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<sup>172</sup> Wadad al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars’ Alternative History of the Muslim Community,” in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 23-75.

<sup>173</sup> Carl Petry has referred to this cluster as “the primary scholastic enterprise of the religio-academic establishment in Cairo.” Along with the other madrasas in the neighborhood, the Nāṣiriyya was an institutional home for “perhaps a majority of the most eminent scholars in Cairo during the Mamluk period.” See Petry, “Educational Institutions: Prestige & Venue,” 109.

<sup>174</sup> Ibrahim lists many figures in this period known for their involvement in religious and scientific disciplines: “‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān, known as al-Ṭuyūrī al-Ḥāsib, was a professional witness specializing in assessing property values (*yashhadu fī qiyām al-amlāk*) who started out teaching in a *maktab* but eventually had a study circle (*ḥalqa*) in the Umayyad Mosque. A group of students benefited from ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s extensive knowledge (*al-yad al-ṭulā*) in calculus, algebra, *muqābalaḥ* (collating, equations), and geometry... Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, the muezzin and *muwaqqit* (time-keeper) in Karīm mosque in the Qubaybāt, was an expert astrologer, astronomer, and maker of astrolabes. He studied astronomy with Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-Muraḥḥil (a deputy Shafi‘i judge...)” See Ibrahim, “Practice and Reform,” 74.



mosque with a library of medical, theological, and legal texts.<sup>175</sup> Al-Nuwayrī does not provide the full investiture document but describes the hospital's dedication, based on the testimony of someone who had attended it:

When [the hospital] was finished, the sultan came to see it along with the nobles, judges, and scholars. Someone who witnessed this told me that the sultan called for a goblet of cordial, drank it, and said: "I hereby bequeath this to those of my stature and those beneath me," and he bequeathed it to master and servant, soldier and commander and vizier, old and young, freeborn and slave, man and woman. And he decreed that all patients leaving the hospital receive clothing during their convalescence, and those who died would be shrouded and buried. Physicians, ophthalmologists, surgeons, and bone-setters were appointed to treat the short-sighted, the sick, the wounded, the broken-boned, both men and women. Attendants and custodians were appointed to take care of the patients, cleaning their rooms, washing their clothes, and bathing them, and they were paid well. Beds, carpets, mattresses, mats, pillows, and blankets were produced, with each patient receiving a complete set of bedding. Group of patients were placed in specialized wards ... with running water in most of them. And spaces were set aside for preparing food, drink, medicines, pastes and powders... There was a place for the head physician to sit and give lectures in medicine which the students would find useful... And [the hospital's services] were not limited to the patients residing within it; medicines and food and drink were also provided to the needy living in their homes...<sup>176</sup>

Al-Nuwayrī oversaw the hospital's affairs for four years. This experience likely helped cultivate his interest in the natural world and those who studied it, which is evident in the zoological and botanical portions of the *Nihāya*.<sup>177</sup> Departing from his

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<sup>175</sup> See Linda Northrup, "Qalāwūn's Patronage of the Medical Sciences in Thirteenth Century Egypt," *Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 119-40. I am also very grateful to Ahmed Ragab for sharing his in-depth knowledge of this institution with me.

<sup>176</sup> *Nihāya* 31:106-8 (DKI: 31:71-73).

<sup>177</sup> A contemporary of al-Nuwayrī's, the physician Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, known as Ibn al-Akfānī (d. 1348), also worked at the hospital, and went on to compose an encyclopaedic text that would serve as the basis for Tāshköprüzādeh's *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda* and al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*. See J. J. Witkam, "Ibn al-Akfānī," *EI2*; idem, *De Egyptische arts Ibn al-Akfānī (gest. 749/1348) en zijn indeling van de wetenschappen* (Leiden: Ter Lugt Pers, 1989).

reserved style in the non-historical portions of the work, Books III and IV (and certain chapters of Book II) are peppered with personal testimonies and contemporary observations about plants and animals. He reports having seen a lion in the Syrian wilderness, elephant tusks in upper Egypt, and crocodile-fighting buffaloes (whose milk, he says, is creamy and delicious) in the Nile.<sup>178</sup> He recounts different contemporary appellations for many birds, such as the bustard, the goose, and the jay,<sup>179</sup> and praises the donkey as the most popular mode of transportation.<sup>180</sup> Although his botanical and zoological treatments are deeply indebted to earlier cosmographical works, he occasionally departs from their classifications and interposes new species that he has seen in person or come across in books.<sup>181</sup> In his discussion of vipers in Book

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<sup>178</sup> On the lion, which al-Nuwayrī claimed to have seen with a group of fifteen soldiers on a night's ride somewhere in the Syrian wilderness (presumably during his military campaigns), see *Nihāya* 9:226 (DKI: 9:143). He reports seeing elephant tusks in Qūṣ in the year 697/1297, before he moved to Cairo; see *ibid.*, 9:304 (DKI: 9:185). The Egyptian buffalo, according to al-Nuwayrī, fights the crocodile, which consequently stays away from the buffalo's refuges in the Nile. In Syria, the buffalo is used in plowing and carrying loads, unlike in Egypt where they are only milked; see *ibid.*, 10:123-24 (DKI: 10:74). See also his report about the crows of Bulunyās (*ibid.*, 10:210, DKI: 10:127), the beautiful snow-white crane that appeared in Egypt in 715 AH (*ibid.*, 10:235, DKI: 10:143-44), and the contemporary breeding of quails (*ibid.*, 10:245-46, DKI: 10:149-50).

<sup>179</sup> On the bustard (*hubāra*, *hubruj*), see *ibid.*, 10:215 (DKI: 10:130-31); on the goose (*iwazz*, *etc.*), see *ibid.*, 10:235-36 (DKI: 10:144); on the jay (*qīq*, *Abu Zurayq*), see *ibid.*, 10:241 (DKI: 10:147).

<sup>180</sup> Many Egyptians, al-Nuwayrī says, ride donkeys and don't bother with horses and mules: "Those among the notables (*a'yān*) who ride [donkeys] despite their ability and means to ride horses or mules do so out of modesty (*al-tawāḍu'*) and a lack of arrogance (*'adam al-kibriyā'*). Those among the merchants (*dhawī al-amwāl*) who ride them and shun the horse and mule may do so in order to save money. And those among the youths (*al-shabāb*) and the rabble (*al-sūqa*) who ride them do so to get around on them because of their nimbleness and the speed of their gait." (*ibid.*, 10:93-94, DKI: 10:57-58.)

<sup>181</sup> Two examples of this interposition are the magpie (*ṣurad*) and the gyrfalcon (*sunqur*), which al-Nuwayrī says that many previous writers neglected to discuss in their chapters on carnivorous birds. About the latter, he says: "It is more glorious than all of the ones we have mentioned...a noble and beautiful bird, white with black spots; it is highly prized by kings. In recent years it has gone for 1000 *dinārs*, but its price has come down of late to about 5000

III, he recounts an interchange with the chief physician of the hospital—the famous physician and scion of a medical dynasty, Ibn Abī Ḥulayqa<sup>182</sup>—who demonstrated to him the preparation of antivenom in the Bīmāristān’s laboratory:

Among the most amazing things I witnessed with respect to vipers was the time when one was sliced up in my presence at al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī in Cairo in 706 AH, in order to make the Fārūq theriac (*al-diryāq al-fārūq*).<sup>183</sup> Its head and tail were cut off, it was skinned, its belly cut open, and it was gutted while continuing to tremble (*takhtaliḥu*). Then it was boiled and its meat came off its bones, and I looked at it and it was still trembling. I was amazed by that and said so to the chief physician, ‘Alam al-Dīn Ibn Abī Ḥulayqa, and he said: “That’s nothing compared to what you will see now. Call for the viper pastilles (*aqrāṣ al-afā’i*)<sup>184</sup> that were prepared over a year ago.” So I did, and they were brought by the quartermaster. They were suspended in honey. The viper meat had been pounded after it was boiled and then ground up with semolina (*samīdh*) and made into pastilles, then placed into honey for over a year. He said to me: “Look at the pastilles,” and I did, and lo and behold! They were trembling gently.<sup>185</sup>

Al-Nuwayrī’s interest in medicine led him to supplement the botanical material that he drew from Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāṭ’s *Mabāḥij al-fīkar wa-manāḥij al-‘ibar*—his major source for Books I, III and IV—with information on the medical and occult

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*dirhams*. Sometimes, when the merchants bring these birds back from the lands of the Franks, the birds die in transit, but if the merchants present the king with the bird’s plumage, they are given half price... Only the sultan may buy these birds, and the nobles may hunt with them only with the sultan’s permission.” (Ibid., 10:204-5, DKI: 10:123-24.)

<sup>182</sup> On Ibn Abī Ḥulayqa, see Northrup, “Qalāwūn’s Patronage of the Medical Sciences.”

<sup>183</sup> On the Fārūq theriac, see Gilbert Watson, *Theriac and Mithridatium: A Study in Therapeutics* (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1966); Adrienne Mayor, *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome’s Deadliest Enemy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 244-45.

<sup>184</sup> On viper pastilles in ancient Greek and medieval Arabic toxicology, see Oliver Kahl, “Two Antidotes from the ‘Empiricals of Ibn at-Tilmīd,’” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55.2 (2010): 479-96.

<sup>185</sup> See *Nihāya* 10:135 (DKI: 10:80-81). See also the following sub-chapter (ibid., 10:141-42, DKI: 10:84-85), in which al-Nuwayrī casts doubt on Ibn Sīna’s view that snake meat lengthens life and preserves youth and vigor.

properties (*khawāṣṣ*) of plants, which were not part of al-Waṭwāṭ's encyclopaedia, as I discuss in chapters 3 and 4. His interest in these matters (and perhaps also his access to the sources in question) was likely a direct consequence of his four-year experience overseeing the affairs of the Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī, its physicians, and educators.

### **The Ethos of Empire**

In this chapter, I have described al-Nuwayrī as a man of his time, a figure who found himself deeply implicated in many of the processes of centralization—political-territorial, financial-administrative, scholarly-educational, and textual—that shaped his period's intellectual production. The *Nihāya* was, like its author, something of an institutional product: a work that came to fruition in the context of colleges, imperial chanceries, and libraries. This environment did not only facilitate the work of a compiler, but also engendered it, insofar as the growing numbers of books and learned people circulating within the network of scholarly institutions could not but convey a sense of the expanding boundaries of knowledge, as noted by Ibn Khaldūn. On the other hand, however, these conditions also made it possible to envision a solution to the problem of too much information, which took the form of the capacious compilatory texts that began to appear in such profusion. The production of such works was not aimed at preventing the *loss* of knowledge (as has been previously supposed), but was more likely a response to the feeling of an *overcrowding* of authoritative sources, a feeling made especially palpable in the scholarly centers of the Mamluk Empire.

In this regard, there are certain congruities in the relationship of encyclopaedism to empire, which may repay investigation, between the Mamluk period

and other imperial settings. As Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh have argued, building on the work of Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and others, the essential functions of the archive (“itemisation, analysis, ordering, hierarchisation, synthesis, synopsis”) belong to a discursive form that is “characteristically imperial”.<sup>186</sup> Discussing another encyclopaedic movement centered in Egypt many centuries before al-Nuwayrī lived, they write: “The Alexandrian library...brought the whole world into a single city, broadcasting the glory of the Ptolemaic rule that had provided the conditions for its possibility. And a whole range of scholars imitated and influenced that totalizing gesture in their individual works, covering a range of subjects inconceivable within the hyper-specialized world of modern academic writing...”<sup>187</sup> There has been very little written about the imperial context of Mamluk intellectual culture, and while it is necessary not to over-emphasize broad commonalities between such diverse historical epochs as Mamluk Egypt and Late Antique Rome (to say nothing of the encyclopaedic production of the British Empire, which motivated Foucault’s inquiries), I contend that the *Nihāya* and many other 14<sup>th</sup> century compilatory texts are reflections of a similarly aggregative ethos. In the next chapter, I examine the conceptual and material tools drawn upon by al-Nuwayrī to perform this work of aggregation.

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<sup>186</sup> Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh, eds., *Ordering knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SHAPE OF THE *NIHĀYA*

Perceiving the shape of a large object sometimes requires looking at it from a distance, where its full dimensions and contours may come into view. A city park appears different from the treetops than it does at street level, and different still from a bird's-eye view, where certain features indiscernible at close range—such as its topography, the relation of foliage to footpaths, and its juxtaposition within a broader landscape—become visible. By the same token, the shape and configuration of a large text are best ascertained at an analytical distance where qualities inaccessible to a close reading—e.g., composition, thematic sweep, relation to a wider field of texts—may reveal themselves.

Al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* is a text that lends itself to such a panoramic survey. It is not simply the fact of its immensity that calls out for an elevated perspective, but also its internal configuration which, as we will see, is highly systematic and purposefully composed. To recall our spatial metaphor, a bird's eye view of a park with no noteworthy topographical features—in other words, a flat, undifferentiated space covered with trees but no footpaths, meadows, or picnic areas—would only confirm the impression gained about the park's form as seen from the ground. On the other hand, a park with carefully-plotted walkways and bridges insinuated amongst manicured gardens, fish ponds and wildlife sanctuaries, meandering creeks and lookout points, is a park whose arrangement can only be fully grasped from the air.

The *Nihāya* is an enormous collection of poetry, literary epistles, historical narratives, taxonomies, legal documents, pharmacopeial antidotes, ancient fables, and much more. A reader parachuting into its pages on any given day might happen upon the recipe for a breath-freshening tonic,<sup>188</sup> or perhaps some advice on how to escape from an angry rhinoceros.<sup>189</sup> On another day, his parachute may bring him down in the midst of several dozen chapters devoted to the medicinal properties of spikenard, porcupine flesh, marigold blossoms, and hundreds of other species, or maybe a first-hand account of financial corruption in the educational institutions of Mamluk Cairo.<sup>190</sup> Were the parachutist to embark upon an exploratory expedition—dropping into hundreds of isolated spots over several months—his efforts would be rewarded with a detailed view of the work’s contents, but it would be a fragmentary one, quite unlike the complete picture of the work sprawled out beneath him during his aerial descent.

In this chapter, I attempt to produce such a picture of the *Nihāya* as a single unified work. It is my contention that seeing the parts in light of the whole can only help to clarify the motives and conceptual horizons of its compiler. Mining the text’s

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<sup>188</sup> To remove the smell of alcohol from your breath, mix equal parts colocynth, fennel, cyperus, cloves, and something called *jīnāḥ* with two parts gum arabic, pound them together, and mix them with rose water. This was apparently a well-known recipe that an unnamed poet set to verse, and al-Nuwayrī vouches for its efficacy (*fa-innahu yaqṭaʿ rāʾiḥat al-khamr min al-fam kamā zaʿamū*). See *Nihāya*, 4:85 (DKI: 4:83).

<sup>189</sup> According to al-Nuwayrī’s informant, a man being chased by an Abyssinian rhinoceros should try to catch hold of a tree branch and hang from it. The rhinoceros will attempt to break down the tree, but if the man urinates on the beast’s horn, it will run away. Unlike the recipe for the breath-freshener in the previous note, al-Nuwayrī cannot vouch for this prescription and concludes his chapter on the rhinoceros with his usual disclaimer: “And God knows what the truth is...” (*wa-llāhu aʿlam bi-l-ṣawāb*). See *ibid.*, 9:316 (DKI: 9:193).

<sup>190</sup> Spikenard: *ibid.*, 12:43-48 (12:24-27); porcupine: *ibid.*, 10:162-66 (DKI: 10:97-99); marigold: *ibid.*, 11:277-28 (DKI: 11:185-87); financial corruption in the Nāṣiriyya *madrasa*: *ibid.*, 32:63 (DKI: 32:43).

contents for specific information—as has generally been the case in prior readings—is a mode of engagement that has its advantages and may tally well with al-Nuwayrī’s own vision for how the *Nihāya* was supposed to be read. On the other hand, approaching the *Nihāya* as a unitary work is a way to understand it not simply as a collection of disparate bits of knowledge, but as a coherent intellectual project.

Consequently, my discussion in this chapter will confine itself to those formal structures visible from an elevated plane. This is not to suggest that this is the most valuable perspective, but simply that a fine-grained analysis of the work’s sources, arguments, and modes of discourse depends upon an understanding of the framework that envelops them. As Ernst Robert Curtius remarked in the preface to his magisterial study of Latinity’s legacy in medieval European literature, “The historical disciplines will progress wherever specialization and contemplation of the whole are combined and interpenetrate... Specialization without universalism is blind. Universalism without specialization is inane.”<sup>191</sup>

### **Books, Sections, Chapters, and Sub-Chapters: The *Nihāya*’s Architecture**

From a bird’s-eye view, the *Nihāya* appears as a variegated landscape demarcated into territories of different shapes and sizes. The main division of the work is into five principal books (*funūn*, sing. *fann*), devoted to the following subjects: (i) heaven and earth; (ii) the human being; (iii) animals; (iv) plants; and (v) the history of the world. Each book is in turn divided into five parts (*aqṣām*, sing. *qism*), and each part contains

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<sup>191</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), ix.



several chapters (*abwāb*, sing. *bāb*), ranging from two to fourteen. Larger chapters occasionally contain sub-chapters (*fuṣūl*, sing. *faṣl*) and even sub-sub-chapters, but these are not usually numbered systematically, nor are they listed in al-Nuwayrī's table of contents.<sup>192</sup> This basic hierarchy—a straightforward system of books, parts, and chapters—provides the architecture for a text that is 9,000 pages long and contains over 2.3 million words.<sup>193</sup>

The most imposing feature of the *Nihāya*, when surveyed as a whole, is its size. Among medieval *adab* compilations, no other work is anywhere near as large. By comparison, Ibn Qutayba's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* is about one tenth the size, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* perhaps a fifth, with most other collections somewhere in between. Viewed alongside these texts, the *Nihāya*'s proportions are something of a puzzle. For one, there is no discernible trend among *adab* works towards increasing bulk over time. Al-Ibshīhī's enormously popular anthology, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf*, was composed several decades after the *Nihāya* and is shorter than the ninth-century *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, and many of the most popular literary anthologies of the Mamluk period were neat little affairs.<sup>194</sup> Nor does al-Nuwayrī assert a desire to surpass his predecessors with such a grandiose product. The *Nihāya* appears abruptly and inexplicably, towering over the works preceding and following it like an elephant in a long train of mules.

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<sup>192</sup> The only *fuṣūl* that do appear in al-Nuwayrī's table of contents are §§2.3.1.1 - 2.3.1.13 (on the subject of praise), and §§2.3.2.1 - 2.3.2.14 (on invective). See *Nihāya*, 1:4-25 (DKI: 1:4-18)

<sup>193</sup> See Appendix A for a translation of al-Nuwayrī's table of contents.

<sup>194</sup> See, for example, Yūnus al-Mālikī, *al-Kanz al-madfūn wa-l-fulk al-mashhūn* (Cairo: ʿAlā dhimmat Ṣāliḥ Bā ʿIsā, 1871), which Thomas Bauer cites as one of the most popular anthologies of this period. See idem, "Anthologies," *EI3*.

The scale of the work is the first sign that it could hardly have served the same function as most other compilations—as a practical textbook, for example, like al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī’s *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’*, or a compact anthology of entertaining material along the lines of al-Ghazūlī’s *Maṭāli‘ al-budūr fī manāzil al-surūr*. The pagination of the autograph manuscript puts the entire work in thirty-one volumes, the size of a worthy personal library, hardly a *vade mecum*.<sup>195</sup> Much more likely, it would seem, it was meant to be read consultatively, in the manner of a dictionary, *ṭabaqāt* work, or Qur’ān commentary, or that it was designed to be amenable to partial copying, whereby a reader could easily find material he was interested in contained within a single volume, and merely copy that volume. As we will see, there is evidence within the work to support both of these possibilities.

The second incongruous feature of the *Nihāya* is its arrangement, which is relentlessly hierarchical. The contents are laid out in a stratified fashion whereby certain subjects are subordinated to others. The horse, for example, is presented in the first chapter of the third section on livestock, which falls in the third book, on animals.<sup>196</sup> The sub-chapter on the bitter orange falls in the first chapter on fruits with

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<sup>195</sup> “For sizes of medieval Islamic libraries, see Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭāwūs and his Library* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 72-77. Carl Petry argues that “[the] inordinate importance attached to encyclopedic absorption of a fixed literary and ideological corpus in Islamic education during the later Middle Ages rendered crucial the maintenance of this corpus. Since all textual materials had to be duplicated by hand, they were in limited supply and very expensive. Relatively few scholars could afford to purchase many books for themselves and a private library represented a noteworthy capital asset.” See Petry, “Some Observations on the Position of the Librarian,” 17-18.

<sup>196</sup> *Nihāya* 9:343-10:78 (DKI: 9:210-10:48).

an inedible peel, part of the second section on trees, in the fourth book on plants.<sup>197</sup> An amusing literary debate between a candelabrum (*sham'adān*) and a lamp (*qindīl*) composed by al-Nuwayrī's contemporary, Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Yamānī (d. 743/1342), appears as the third sub-sub-chapter of the tenth sub-chapter on candles, candelabra, and lamps, part of the fourth chapter on fire, in the second section on meteorological phenomena, in the first book on heaven and earth.<sup>198</sup> Within this maze of chapter headings there is a compiler at work, seeking to domesticate the heterogeneity of his material through his zeal for classification. The result is a system where structural features are foregrounded rather than hidden in the shadows, orienting the *Nihāya*'s readers even as they threaten to overwhelm them (see table below).

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 11:111-16 (DKI: 11:74-78). This sub-chapter is one of the few on fruits that does not contain any morphological or medicinal information in it, but is composed exclusively of poetry.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 1:124-29 (DKI: 1:16-21). According to G.J.H. van Gelder, al-Nuwayrī was the first compiler to transmit this epistle. See idem, "Sham'a," *EI2*.

**Table 4: The *Nihāya*'s three-tiered structure**

<i>Fann</i>	<i>Qism</i>	<i>Bāb</i>
1. Heaven & Earth	1.1: Heavens	5 chapters
	1.2: Meteorological phenomena	4 chapters
	1.3: Units of time, holidays, feasts	4 chapters
	1.4: Physical geography	7 chapters
	1.5: Human geography	5 chapters
2. Human Being	2.1: Etymology, morphology, genealogy, emotions, love poetry, etc.	4 chapters
	2.2: Pre-Islamic proverbs, practices, stories, etc.	5 chapters
	2.3: Praise, invective, pleasantries, jests, wine, music, etc.	7 chapters
	2.4: Congratulations, elegies, asceticism, prayers of invocation, etc.	4 chapters
	2.5: Rulers, advisors, generals, armies, scribes, religious authorities, etc.	14 chapters
3. Animals	3.1: Carnivores	3 chapters
	3.2: Other wild beasts	3 chapters
	3.3: Livestock	3 chapters
	3.4: Venomous creatures	2 chapters
	3.5: Birds, fish, insects, hunting implements	8 chapters
4. Plants	4.1: Plant origin, soil, foodstuffs, vegetables	3 chapters
	4.2: Trees and fruit	3 chapters
	4.3: Aromatic flowers	2 chapters
	4.4: Gardens, flowers, resins, mannas	4 chapters
	4.5: Perfumery, distillates, sexual medicines	11 chapters
5. History	5.1: From Adam and Eve to the People of the Ditch	8 chapters
	5.2: The stories of Ibrāhīm and other important figures	7 chapters
	5.3: The stories of Mūsā and other important figures	10 chapters
	5.4: Kings of China, Persia, Byzantium, India, etc., and the pre-Islamic Arabs	5 chapters
	5.5: Islamic history	12 chapters

The list displayed in the table above represents the overarching structural paradigm for the *Nihāya*, but it gives no hint of the myriad branching subterranean networks of fourth- and fifth-order sub-chapters, within which most of the work's contents are distributed. The chapter on the horse mentioned above, for example, is split up into twenty-three sub-chapters not listed in the *Nihāya*'s table of contents; they appear in a text block beneath the chapter heading. Scanned quickly by a reader, they provide a succinct summary of §3.3.1 and fill in the gaps left by its general title ("On the horse").

Some of the sub-chapters are no longer than a single page, containing a few Prophetic *ḥadīths* on the subject of horses (e.g., §3.3.1.5, "On what has been said about the supplications of horses for their masters";<sup>199</sup> §3.3.1.9, "On what has been said about the prohibition of selling horse semen"<sup>200</sup>). Others are longer and provide a scanty sampling of the vast equestrian literature and lore inherited from the pre-Islamic world (e.g. §3.3.1.14, "On what has been said about racing horses and what is permitted and what is forbidden with respect to it..."; §3.3.1.19, "On what has been said about the nature, behaviors, praiseworthy attributes, good qualities, and the signs that point to the excellence and nobility of a horse"; etc.) There is at least one section that could be

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<sup>199</sup> In this sub-chapter, al-Nuwayrī demonstrates his knowledge of *ḥadīth* by performing a *matn* analysis on an obscure report contained an epistle by a late transmitter (al-Abīwardī, d. 667 AH), claiming that someone living at the time of the Muslim conquest of Egypt argued that one's horse could offer prayers to God on its owner's behalf. See *Nihāya*, 9:354-55 (DKI: 9:218-19).

<sup>200</sup> "Despite all the speculations in horsedealing and trading which this lively commerce in horses engendered within Islam, one can be certain that no-one ever thought of speculating financially in regard to the semen (*ʿasb*) of stallions, since the Prophet had formally proscribed making money out of breeding." (F. Viré, "Khayl," *EI2*.)

read as a sub-sub-chapter (viz., §3.3.1.3, or perhaps §3.3.1.2.1), as its sole function is to gloss two cryptic Prophetic *ḥadīths* found in a previous sub-chapter (see below).

**Table 5: Divisions of *Nihāya* §3.3.1 (On the Horse)**

§	Sub-chapter title	v./p. <sup>201</sup>
3.3.1.1	On the creation of the horse and who first broke it and rode it	9:211-13
3.3.1.2	On the excellence and blessedness of the horse and the merit of taking care of it	9:213-15
3.3.1.3	Explanation of obscure words contained in the two <i>ḥadīths</i> [in the previous sub-chapter]	9:215-18
3.3.1.4	On what has been said about the virtue of loaning your stallion to someone so that it can cover that person's mare <sup>202</sup>	9:218
3.3.1.5	On what has been said about the supplications of horses for their masters	9:219
3.3.1.6	On what has been said about how the devil will not corrupt anyone who has a thoroughbred ( <i>ʿatīq</i> ) in his house, nor will he enter a house with a thoroughbred in it	9:219
3.3.1.7	On what has been said about encouraging horse procreation and forbidding the castration of horses and permitting it, and forbidding the shearing of its mane and forelocks	9:219-20
3.3.1.8	On what has been said about eating horseflesh, by way of authorization ( <i>ibāḥa</i> ) and disapproval ( <i>karāḥa</i> )	9:221
3.3.1.9	On what has been said about the prohibition of selling horse semen	9:222
3.3.1.20	On what has been said about honoring horses and prohibiting their debasement	9:222
3.3.1.11	On what has been said about tethering your horse, and on their colors and signs [i.e. blazes, stockings, and other markings]	9:223-26
3.3.1.12	On what has been said about the preference of mares over stallions and vice versa	9:226-27
3.3.1.13	On what has been said about bad omens associated with horses, and what is inauspicious with respect to whiteness of their stockings	9:227-28
3.3.1.14	On what has been said about racing horses and what is permitted and what is forbidden with respect to it, and the conditions of training ( <i>taḍmīr</i> ) for races, and the names of the horses on the racecourse ( <i>ḥalba</i> )	9:228-33

<sup>201</sup> The page numbers above correspond to the Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya edition of the *Nihāya*.

<sup>202</sup> Differences in the wording of chapter titles (i.e. “on what *has been said* about the horse” vs. “on the horse”) does not usually signal a different kind of rhetorical treatment, except in the case of chapters containing descriptive poetic material (*waṣf wa-tashbīh*) and the chapters devoted to *ḥadīth* on a given subject (*fīmā jāʿa* vs. *fīmā qīla*).

**Table 5 (cont.): Divisions of *Nihāya* §3.3.1**

§	Sub-chapter title	v./p. <sup>203</sup>
3.3.1.15	On the conditions of training	9:233-34
3.3.1.16	On what the owner of a horse gets from the shares of plunder, and the differences between thoroughbreds ( <i>‘irāb</i> ), mixed breeds ( <i>hujun</i> ), and draft horses ( <i>barādhīn</i> ) with respect to this issue	9:234-36
3.3.1.17	On the non-applicability of the almsgiving obligation ( <i>zakāt</i> ) to horses	9:236-39
3.3.1.18	On how the [Bedouin] Arabs described the horse	10:3-14
3.3.1.19	On what has been said about its nature, behaviors, praiseworthy attributes, good qualities, and the signs that point to the excellence and nobility of a horse	10:14-22
3.3.1.20	On the names of the Prophet’s horses	10:22-25
3.3.1.21	On the names of some of the celebrated horses among the Arabs	10:25-28
3.3.1.22	On similes about horses in prose and poetry	10:28-39
3.3.1.23	Some choice selections ( <i>ṭarāʿif</i> ) accusing the horse of emaciation and weakness	10:39-48

### Thematic Modularity & Cross-Referencing

The sophistication of the *Nihāya*’s internal arrangement could not have been the result of a haphazard or improvisatory compositional method, nor was it an architectural plan formulated at the outset of the work only to be abandoned in practice. The *Nihāya*’s actual divisions mirror the structure presented in its table of contents. This is in contrast to a text such as *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, whose author describes the structure of the work in his preface but takes considerable license in modifying the plan as he goes along.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, Pliny’s *Natural History* is ostensibly based upon a very detailed table

<sup>203</sup> The page numbers above correspond to the Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya edition of the *Nihāya*.

<sup>204</sup> According to Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, each of the *ʿIqd*’s twenty-five books is divided into two sections (*ajzāʾ*), however Jibrāʾīl Jabbūr has shown that several of the manuscripts of the *ʿIqd* in the



of contents but pursues a different scheme altogether across its thirty-seven volumes. As Trevor Murphy observes, “what you actually encounter when you read the body of the book sequentially is detail juxtaposed with detail, parataxis, particularity, multiplicity, and self-contradiction. The train of thought is often interrupted, since Pliny is usually willing to be diverted from the topic in hand in another direction by association of ideas.”<sup>205</sup> In the *Nihāya*, thematic entropy is kept in check by the constraints of the work’s architecture, a system that some have found overly rigid, even if logically composed.<sup>206</sup>

The avoidance of digression, allusion, and periphrasis—qualities characteristic of the discursive mode of *adab* itself—brings us to another structural element of interest, namely the thematic consistency of the *Nihāya*’s chapters. Once again, in distinction to the prevailing tenor of many other pre-modern encyclopaedic works, al-Nuwayrī’s text is highly modular: it stays on topic, eschews excursus, and remains within the disciplinary or thematic boundaries established by its table of contents. Locating information on a specific topic does not require sifting through the pages of the entire work, unlike the *Natural History*, which, as Murphy notes, often leads its readers down meandering paths away from the main thematic thoroughfares:

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archives of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya contain up to five or six sections per chapter. See idem, *Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih wa-‘Iqduh* (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a ‘l-Kāthūlīkiyya, 1933), 32.

<sup>205</sup> Murphy, *Pliny the Elder*, 30. Murphy notes that “often, having set out to consult the *Natural History* for the answer to a particular question, I have arrived on the far periphery of what I wanted to know unsure of how I got there, dazed by the charms of a dozen irrelevant facts. An animal may suggest a medical cure; an item of trade, a place; a place, a story about a king.”

<sup>206</sup> Blachère, “Quelques réflexions,” 9: “Cette construction est certes artificielle, rigide et tyrannique; elle condamne souvent l’auteur à des renvois; elle a toutefois le mérite de la clarté et obéit à une logique d’ailleurs plus interne que rigoureusement scientifique.” In contrast to some of the other Mamluk encyclopaedists, Blachère argues, “An-Nuwayrī sait où il va.” (10)

In book 8, on land-animals, for example, the animals are theoretically ordered in descending order of size and nobility: elephants, being in Pliny's opinion the animal most like humans, come first, then lions, and so on. But this sequence is interrupted immediately by the association of ideas: the mortal enemy of the elephant, the animal antithetical to it, is the serpent, and so the eternal war between serpent and elephant must bring the chapter to its close. This digression on serpents in turn justifies the inclusion of a long section about them (8.35 ff.) before the thread is taken up again with the introduction of the lion.<sup>207</sup>

In the *Nihāya*'s chapter on the elephant, by contrast, al-Nuwayrī self-consciously contains the drift of ideas towards tangential subjects. After a discussion of the animal's genetic lineage (the product of a buffalo and a pig); mating habits (strict monogamy enforced by jealous males); provenance (India); and the length of its tusks (about which he provides some personal testimony) al-Nuwayrī briefly mentions the use of elephants in military conquests.<sup>208</sup> No sooner does he furnish an example of this historical practice—Maḥmūd of Ghazna's famous sieges—than he redirects the narrative back to the subject at hand, promising his reader to return to Maḥmūd's war elephants in his discussion of the Ghaznavid state in Book V.

This practice of cross-referencing, which is widespread in the *Nihāya*, is a counterweight to the dissociating effects of its hierarchical arrangement. When in the course of treating a particular subject al-Nuwayrī arrives at a point where the discussion threatens to head off on a dangerous tangent, he occasionally asks the reader to pick up the thread in a different chapter, thereby arresting the easy flow of an anecdote for the sake of thematic unity. A cross-reference can be as vague as an

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<sup>207</sup> Murphy, *Pliny the Elder*, 30.

<sup>208</sup> *Nihāya* 9:304 (DKI: 9:185).

allusion to a discussion earlier in the same section, or as specific as a precise citation to a different part of the *Nihāya* altogether, including its chapter and volume numbers. For example, in his sub-chapter on literary descriptions of al-Andalus, al-Nuwayrī begins by quoting an excerpt from an epistle by the famous Cordovan jurist and litterateur Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). He follows the excerpt with a list of books worth consulting on the topic of al-Andalus, such as Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī's (d. 543/1147) *al-Dhakhīra fī maḥāsin ahl al-Jazīra* and al-Faṭḥ Ibn Khāqān's (d. ca. 529/1134) *Qalā'id al-'iqyān*, and concludes the chapter with the following statement:

We will discuss, God willing, the state of al-Andalus, its settlement, and its kings when we take up the subject of its conquest, and that is in the fifth chapter of the first section of the fifth book on history, which deals with the stories of the Umayyad state...during the caliphate of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, during the year 92 of the *hijra*.<sup>209</sup>

Other examples of cross-references include al-Nuwayrī's reminder to his readers of the zoological treatment of the musk deer (§3.2.3) in his botanical discussion of musk and its varieties (§4.5.1), and his mention of the sections on fruits, flowers, and gardens (§§4.2-4) in a sub-chapter on love and passion (§2.1.3.6), where he alludes to the importance of botanical imagery in classical poetry. A particularly targeted cross-reference is found in al-Nuwayrī's genealogical discussion of the sons of Nizār (grandson of 'Adnān, ancestor of the Northern Arabs, §2.1.4.3), which points to a specific proverb about these legendary figures falling "under the letter *hamza*, in the first chapter of the second section of this book, in the beginning of the third volume of

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 1:359 (DKI: 1:331).

our work...”<sup>210</sup> This level of specificity in the cross-reference ensures that locating the proverb in question is a matter of a few page flips and a scan through some rubricated keywords, rather than an afternoon’s slog through hundreds of pages’ worth of miscellaneous information.<sup>211</sup>

**Table 6: Cross-references in *Nihāya*, Book I**

#	From	To	Cross-reference Text
1	§1.2.3.2	§5.0	وإذا تموج من الجنوب إلى الشمال ، سمي ربح الجنوب ، وهي الربح التي أهلك الله عز وجل بها عاداً وسيأتي ذكر ذلك إن شاء الله تعالى في الفن الخامس من كتابنا هذا <sup>212</sup>
2	§1.3.4.3	§5.4.3	وسيأتي ذكر ذلك إن شاء الله تعالى في أخبار الروم في فن التاريخ ، وهو في الجزء الثالث عشر من هذا الكتاب . <sup>213</sup>
3	§1.5.2.22	§5.0	وكانت عمارة مسجد البيت المقدس بأمر الله عز وجل لبنيه داود عليه السلام أن يعمره ثم لم يقدر له عمارته وقدر الله تعالى ذلك على يدي سليمان بن داود عليهما السلام ، فهو الذي عمره . وسيأتي ذكر ذلك إن شاء الله تعالى مبينا في الفن الخامس في التاريخ . <sup>214</sup>

<sup>210</sup> In certain instances, al-Nuwayrī even specifies that a volume number refers to “this copy of the work,” a little cue to any future copyists to make the necessary adjustments to the citation. See, for example *ibid.*, 1:374 (DKI: 1:347, §1.5.3.2), 2:210-211 (DKI: 2:223, §2.1.3.6).

<sup>211</sup> See also *ibid.*, 1:401 (DKI: 1:370), the introduction to a chapter on “descriptions of strongholds and fortresses,” which includes an intervention by al-Nuwayrī on his rationale for introducing a cross-reference. He writes: “I summarized this chapter in the second Book, which follows this Book, [in the section] on the necessities of the ruler. However, I attached it to this Book because of its appropriateness and resemblance to [its subject matter], and so kept it out of the second Book and merely presented a summary there.”

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:97 (DKI: 1:91).

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:194 (DKI: 1:184).

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:328 (DKI 1:304).

Table 6 (cont.): Cross-references in *Nihāya*, Book I

#	From	To	Cross-reference Text
4	§1.5.2.32	§5.3.2	هذا ما اتفق إيراده في فضائل البيت المقدس ، وسنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى من أخباره طرفا آخر وهو الباب الثاني ، من القسم الثالث من الفن الخامس في التاريخ عند ذكرنا لأخبار سليمان بن داود عليهما السلام . فلنذكر خلاف ذلك <sup>215</sup>
5	§1.5.2.35	§4.4.1	وسنذكر وصفها في باب الرياض إن شاء الله تعالى . <sup>216</sup>
6	§1.5.2.36	§5.5.12	وسنذكر إن شاء الله أخبار مصر وبنيه عند ذكرنا لملوك مصر ، وهو في الفن الخامس من التاريخ <sup>217</sup>
7	§1.5.2.40	§5.3.2	وسياأتي خبره إن شاء الله تعالى في التاريخ في ذكر ملوك اليونان . <sup>218</sup>
8	§1.5.2.41	§1.4.7 & §1.5	ومن فضائلها النيل ، وقد تقدم ذكره في باب الأنهار . ومن عجائبها الهرمان وسياأتي ذكرها في باب المباني القديمة إن شاء الله تعالى. <sup>219</sup>
9	§1.5.2.43	§5.1.5	وسنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى حال الأندلس وابتداء عمارتها وملكها عند ذكرنا فتحها ، وهو في الباب الخامس من القسم الأول من الفن الخامس في التاريخ من أخبار الدولة الأموية في التاريخ من أخبار الدولة الأموية في خلافة الوليد بن عبد الملك بن مروان في سنة اثنان وتسعين من الهجرة. <sup>220</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 1:339 (DKI: 1:314).<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 1:344 (DKI: 1:318).<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 1:348 (DKI: 1:322).<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 1:351 (DKI: 1:324).<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 1:355 (DKI: 1:328).<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 1:359 (DKI: 1:332).

Table 6 (cont.): Cross-references in *Nihāya*, Book I

10	§1.5.3.2	§5.1.5	وسنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى خبر إرم ذات العماد بما هو أبسط من هذا عند ذكرنا لخبر شديد وشداد ، ابني عاد ؛ وهو في الباب الخامس من القسم الأول ، من الفن الخامس في التاريخ ، وذلك في السفر الحادي عشر من هذه النسخة من كتابنا هذا فتأمله هناك . والله تعالى أعلم . <sup>221</sup>
11	§1.5.3.3	§5.4.1	وسنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى في أخبار السد وكيفية بنائه وطوله وعرضه ، وغير ذلك مما هو متعلق به عند ذكرنا لأخبار ذي القرنين فتأمله هناك ، وهو في الباب الأول من القسم الرابع من الفن الخامس في التاريخ ، وهو في السفر الثاني عشر من هذه النسخة من كتابنا هذا . <sup>222</sup>
12	§1.5.3.17	§5.4.2	وسنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى خبر الأهرام عند ذكرنا لأخبار ملوك مصر الذين كانوا قبل الطوفان وبعده ، وذلك في الباب الثاني من القسم الرابع من الفن الخامس ، وهو في السفر الثاني عشر من هذه النسخة من كتابنا هذا فتأمله هناك <sup>223</sup>
13	§1.5.3.25	§5.0	. وعجائب المباني كثيرة ، سنذكر إن شاء الله تعالى منها جملة في أخبار ملوك مصر الذين كانوا قبل الطوفان وبعده فتأمله هناك تجده <sup>224</sup>
14	§1.5.4	§2.5.2	وهذا الباب قد ترجمت عليه في الفن الثاني الذي يلي هذا الفن فيما يحتاج إليه الملك . وإنما ضممته إلى هذا الفن لمناسبته له وشبهه به ، واستثنيت من الفن الثاني واقتصرت فيه على مجرد الترجمة . وبالله التوفيق . <sup>225</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 1:374 (DKI: 1:347).

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 1:378-79 (DKI: 1:350).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 1:390 (DKI: 1:360).

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 1:400 (DKI: 1:370).

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 1:401 (DKI: 1:370).

Cross-references act as bridges between the work's textual territories. In the course of studying the *Nihāya*, I have come across over one hundred such citations, a web of interlocking strands that knit the work together and give it a unified texture. The table above contains fourteen cross-references from Book I. Some (e.g., #1 and #3) are simple postponements, telling the reader that the subject will be picked up again in Book V. Others are more targeted: #4 tells the reader that the discussion of Jerusalem will be re-visited in §5.3.2, when al-Nuwayrī addresses the stories of Solomon, son of David. The most targeted of all the citations are those that specify the volume and chapter of a citation (e.g., #2, #10, #12).

**Table 7: Cross-references in the *Nihāya* (summary)**

<i>Fann</i>	<i># of cross-references</i>	<i>cross-references to fann 5</i>
1. Heaven and Earth	14	11
2. Human Being	47	27
3. Animals	6	1
4. Plants	2	0
5. History	47	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>52</b>

The table above contains a summary of the numbers of cross-references I have happened upon in the course of my readings; it is likely that they are just the tip of the iceberg, and that the work contains far more. Most of these cross-references appear in the *Nihāya*'s first four *funūn* and direct the reader to specific chapters in the fifth *fann* on history, but this last *fann* is also replete with cross-references that help the reader navigate its many volumes. In this manner historical and literary materials are separated, but the links between chapters help to preserve the conceit that all of the

*Nihāya*'s contents fall under the realm of *adab*. The following six figures provide a global view of cross-references across each *fann*, and in the *Nihāya* as a whole.



Figure 5: Cross-references originating in *Nihāya*, Book I

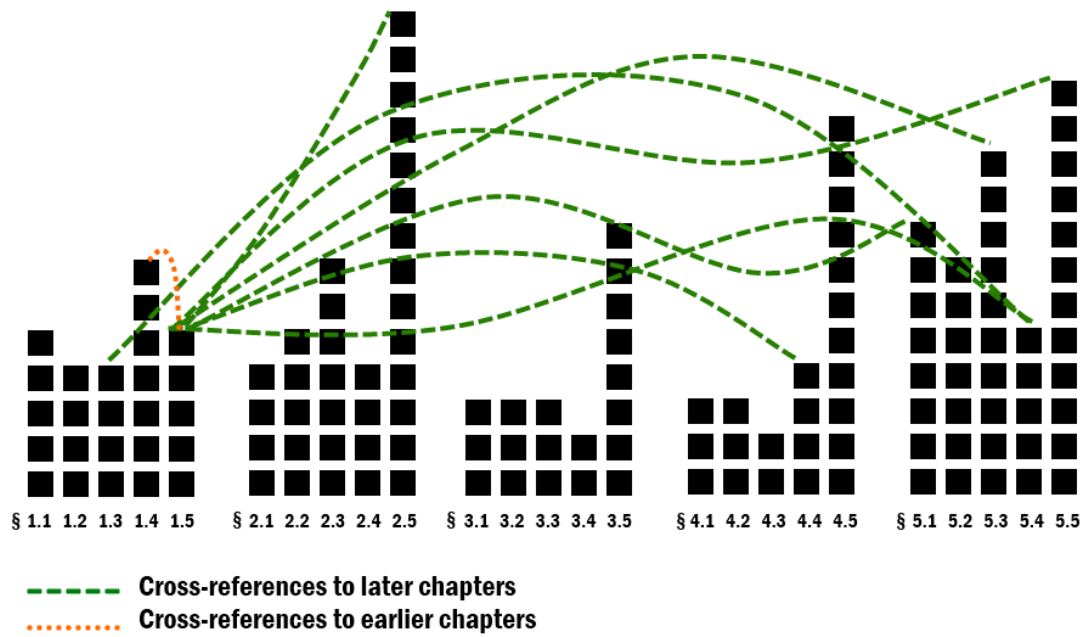


Figure 6: Cross-references originating in *Nihāya*, Book II

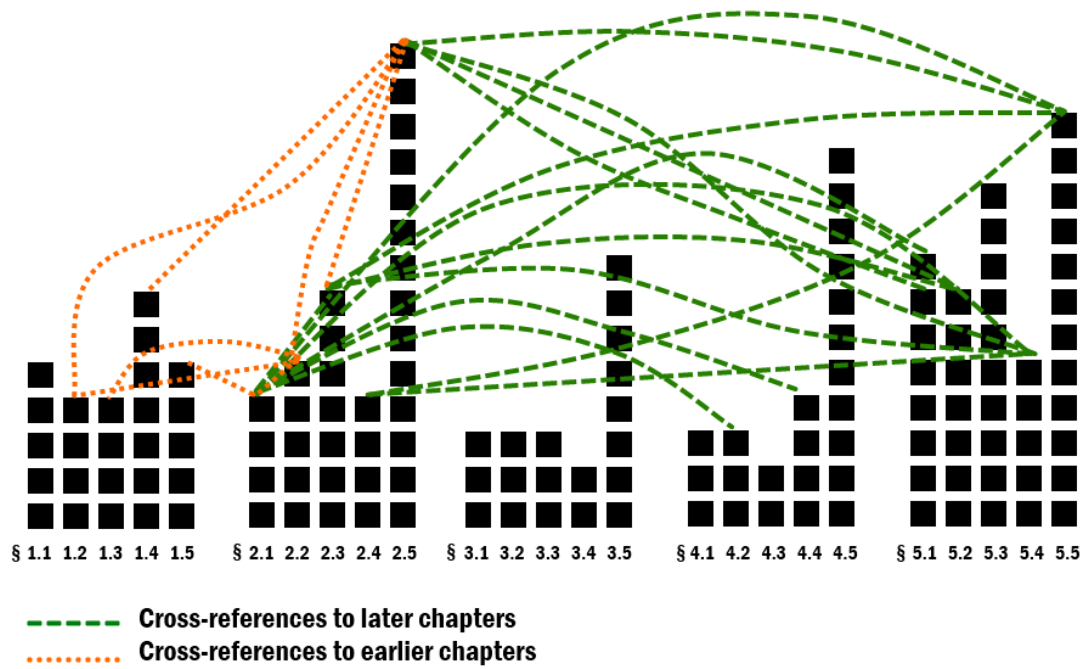


Figure 7: Cross-references originating in *Nihāya*, Book III

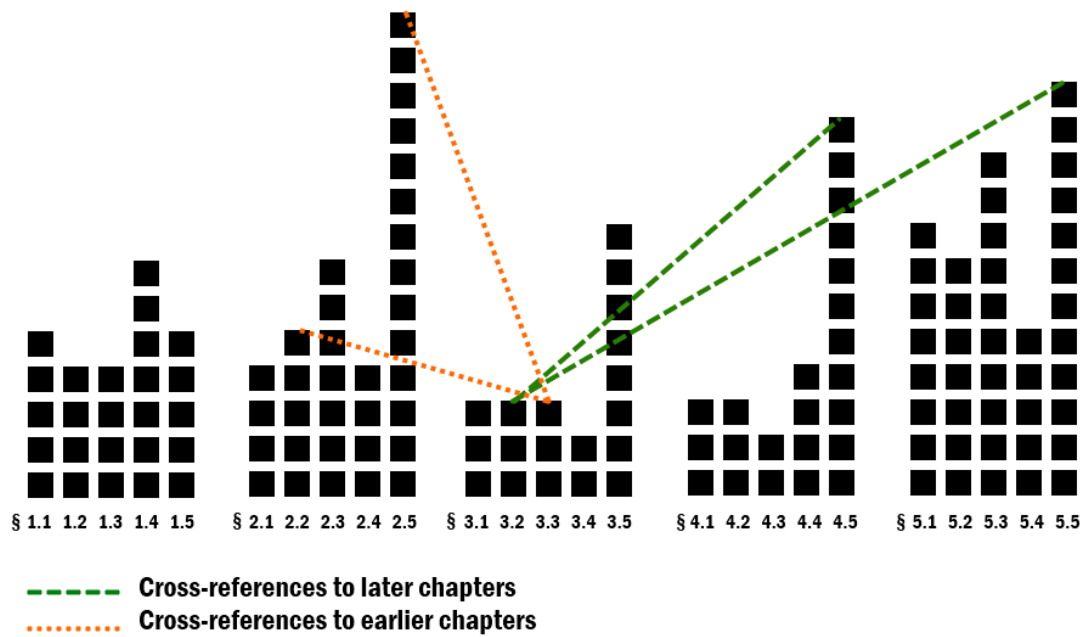


Figure 8: Cross-references originating in *Nihāya*, Book IV

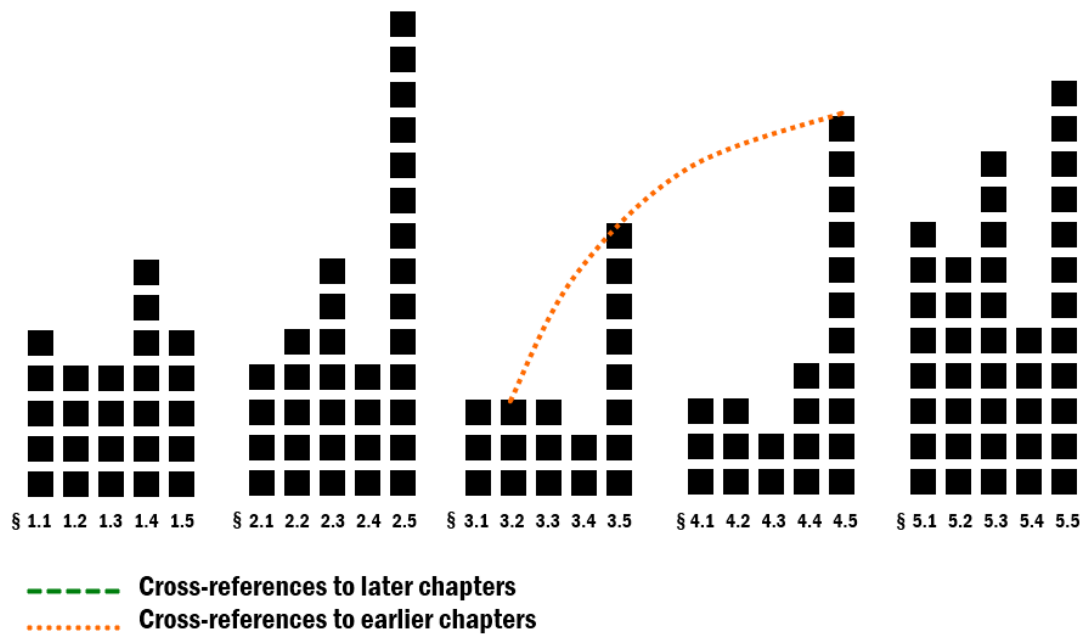
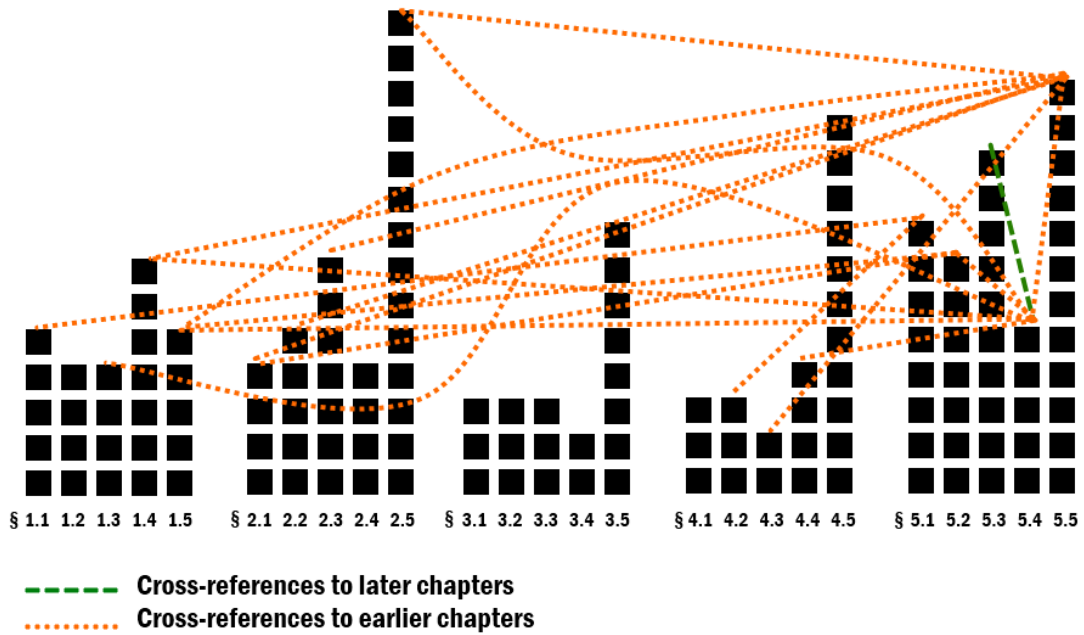


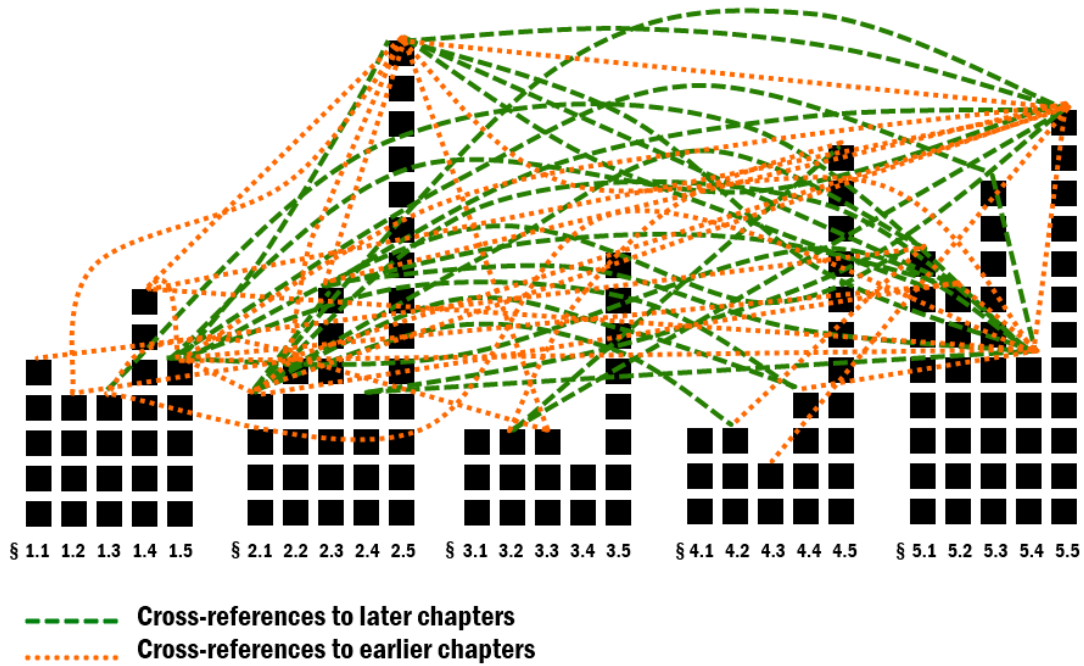
Figure 9: Cross-references originating in *Nihāya*, Book V



The figures above portray the networks of cross-references across the *Nihāya*, which are found in greater abundance in Books I, II, and V.<sup>226</sup> The books on animals and plants originate many fewer cross-references, which may tell us something about al-Nuwayrī's working method, given that Books III and IV are far more dependent on a single source than any of the other Books (as discussed in Chapter 4). In the figure below, we see what the cumulative picture of cross-referencing looks like across the *Nihāya*.

<sup>226</sup> Each black square in the figures above represents a chapter (*bāb*), each column of squares represents a section (*qism*), and each group of columns represents a book (*fann*) of the *Nihāya*. For the sake of visual clarity, the green and orange lines are meant to indicate cross-references between sections rather than individual chapters, and each line can stand for multiple cross-references. In other words, five cross-references—two from §1.3.4 to §5.4.2, and three from §1.3.1 to §5.4.5—would be indicated by a single green line stretching from §1.3 to §5.4.

Figure 10: Cross-references across the *Nihāya*



Like the prefatory remarks, the *Nihāya*'s cross-references offer us a glimpse into the personality of its author, who remains mostly hidden amongst his sources, quotations, and excerpts. The citational web that spans the work is a token of the *Nihāya*'s purposeful design and evidence of the self-consciousness with which al-Nuwayrī assumed the challenge of making his enormous compendium navigable. It also brings home the fact that the hierarchy and modularity of the work are not accidental properties but features likely intended to enable a certain mode of reading—one based on selective access to an organized corpus of knowledge rather than a linear procession through the text from beginning to end. Without some kind of organizational structure (and absent the use of foliation), there would be no way of specifying the destination of

a cross-reference.<sup>227</sup> And without a considerable degree of thematic modularity, there would be no point. Cross-references reveal how the apparatus that al-Nuwayrī constructed was probably designed to work, sending readers to the far-flung corners of the text where they could reasonably expect to find what they were looking for.

Maaïke van Berkel has similarly argued that the manuscripts of al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* feature innovations in structure and design, elements that signaled a re-orientation of reading and research habits during the Mamluk period. Drawing upon the work of Marco Mostert, Mary and Richard Rouse, and Jean-Claude Schmitt,<sup>228</sup> van Berkel suggests that the 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts of al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ* contained various codicological features that suggested a consultative function. Such features included the use of running headers, rubrication, illumination, keywords in the margins, overlining, different calligraphic styles, spacing, tables of contents, and a very systematic organizational scheme. The autographs of al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāya* exhibit

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<sup>227</sup> See Riedel, "Islamic Episteme": "One of the most puzzling aspects of Islamic manuscripts, at least from the perspective of western scholars, is that extant numbering systems were not utilized for the invention of analytical finding-devices, especially indices and concordances. Even chapter or section numbers, when they were used, as in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, to mark and hence secure the sequence of the components of a work, were often written out instead of being abbreviated with numerals. But close examination of Islamic manuscripts reveals the means employed to facilitate the reader's orientation: division of texts into chapters, sections, or paragraphs; keywords on the margins; and illumination, such as rubrication, overlining, differently sized scripts, and systems of separators. Because research on Islamic manuscripts in general, and anthologies and miscellanies in particular, is still in its very early stages, it is impossible to elucidate both the coexistence of various reading practices and the uses of literacy through a comprehensive interpretation of the cooperation between the visual organization of the page layout and the order of a manuscript's contents." (206-8)

<sup>228</sup> See Marco Mostert, "What Happened to Literacy in the Middle Ages? Scriptural Evidence for the History of the Western Literate Mentality," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 108 (1995): 323-35; Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Recueils Franciscains d'Exempla et Perfectionnement des Techniques Intellectuelles du XIIIe au XVe siècle," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* 135 (1977): 5-21.

similar codicological features: there is extensive rubrication, drawing attention to the chapter and sub-chapter headings, as well as changes of topic. In later manuscripts of the *Nihāya*, these features would be combined with other finding devices such as thumb indexes and elaborate margin formats. (See Appendix C)

It is important, however, not to make too much of the functional aspect of this architecture. The *Nihāya* was not a 14<sup>th</sup> century desk reference, an organized catalogue of innumerable shards of fact that could easily be called up with a flip of a few pages. While certain portions of the text are readily navigable using the *fann-qism-bāb* system and the cross-references, other areas contain chapters so large that the targeted retrieval of “information” clearly could not have been al-Nuwayrī’s envisioned mode of reader engagement.<sup>229</sup> Dagmar Riedel has argued that the lack of foliation in Islamic manuscripts before the eighteenth century meant that when “a reader consulted a manuscript for reference purposes, he scanned the text in one direction, from the introduction to a particular place” rather than moving “in one single step from the survey in the introduction to an immediately identifiable page or folio within the manuscript.”<sup>230</sup> I concur with this assessment, but also assume that in the case of al-

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<sup>229</sup> See for example *Nihāya* §2.5.14, §2.3.6, and §5.5.12. I discuss these larger chapters and how they were likely meant to be read, below.

<sup>230</sup> “How the reader was informed about the contents of a manuscript provides important clues about reading styles. Until the eighteenth century Islamic manuscripts usually contained a survey of contents without page numbers, which, as the conclusion of the introduction, directly preceded the first chapter... Since the survey indicates neither the exact place of a chapter within the manuscript nor its approximate length, the reader cannot move in one single step from the survey in the introduction to an immediately identifiable page or folio within the manuscript. The efficiency of information retrieval in Islamic manuscripts depends instead on the individual reader’s ability to understand the textual divisions, page layout, and illumination, and to utilize their clues while scanning the text. The survey of contents in the introduction serves the purpose of informing the reader about the scope and organization of a work without being designed as an analytical orientation device. When a reader consulted a

Nuwayrī's *Nihāya*, the size factor alone would have made such a linear progression impractical. Plus, al-Nuwayrī's inclusion of volume numbers in many of his cross-references represents a kind of "macro-foliation": while it could not bring the reader to his desired destination in a single step, it could at least eliminate one step in the process.

### **Taxonomy, the Ideological Science**

We might push these observations about the arrangement of the *Nihāya* one step further by proposing that the work's self-consciously foregrounded architecture should be understood as more than just an expression of al-Nuwayrī's fastidiousness. The careful attention paid to the ways that different materials are combined, separated, juxtaposed, subordinated, and cross-referenced invites us to read the *Nihāya*'s composition as a reflection of a certain epistemological outlook, a textual translation of the compiler's assumptions about how different fields of knowledge, genres, and discourses relate to one another. A humble cross-reference, in this respect, while telling the *Nihāya*'s medieval reader how to get from point 'A' to point 'B', also tells its modern reader how al-Nuwayrī conceived of the *relation* between 'A' and 'B', the boundary between the two intellectual fields that the cross-reference aims to bridge.

In other words, the *Nihāya*'s architecture can be thought of as a kind of taxonomic apparatus as much as an organizational scheme. To the extent that we

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manuscript for reference purposes, he scanned the text in one direction, from the introduction to a particular place. Today we use this reading style when we are running through rolls of microfilms searching for specific data. The long film strip, while being moved past the projector's lens, does not allow for taking shortcuts, and complicates jumping back and forth." (Riedel, "Islamic Episteme," 210-11.)

regard it as such, we might ask in a Foucauldian vein what cultural assumptions it encodes and what “associational valences” its contents acquire by virtue of their place in the overall system.<sup>231</sup> To take a cue from al-Nuwayrī, I will ask my reader to pick up the thread of this discussion in its natural place, which is Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

### **The *Nihāya* and the Classical *Adab* Encyclopaedia**

The structural features we have discussed thus far—i.e., hierarchical arrangement, thematic modularity, cross-references, foregrounded architecture, etc.—complicate the *Nihāya*’s relationship to most other encyclopaedic *adab* collections. Many works of this kind are arranged according to a linear, non-hierarchical sequence:<sup>232</sup> chapters are sometimes grouped into clusters based on implicit themes (e.g. ethics, politics, etc.), or according to a semantic logic of descending significance (e.g. sovereignty to women),<sup>233</sup> but the dominant organizational trend seems to have been towards long chains of chapters rather than complex hierarchies.

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<sup>231</sup> “Taxonomy is the most ideological of sciences, in that it embeds a largely arbitrary system as a foundational basis for every form of linguistic and conceptual distinction and for cultural meaning making. Objects acquire a seemingly natural identity and associational valences by virtue of their position in a taxonomic system that itself aspires to naturalness and invisibility.” (David Porter, “The Crisis of Comparison and the World Literature Debates,” *Profession* (2011), 252.)

<sup>232</sup> Fedwa Malti-Douglas’s *Structures of avarice: the Bukhalā’ in medieval Arabic literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1985) is one of the few monograph-length studies of anthological structures in classical Arabic literature. See also eadem, “Structure and organization in a monographic *adab* work: *al-Taṭfīl* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40.3 (July 1981), 227-45; Geert Jan van Gelder, “Against Women, and Other Pleasantries: The Last Chapter of Abū Tammām ‘Ḥamāsa,’” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 16 (1985): 61-72; Nadia Maria El Cheikh, “In Search for the Ideal Spouse,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45.2 (2002), 179-96; Kilpatrick, “A Genre in Classical Arabic Literature”; Thomas, “The Concept of Muḥāḍara”; Riedel, “Islamic Episteme”; Orfali, “Art of Anthology.”

<sup>233</sup> On declining linear sequences in *adab* collections, see Malti-Douglas, *Structures of avarice*, 14; Thomas, “The Concept of Muḥāḍara, 222-23; Riedel, “Islamic Episteme,” 234.



The difference between these two modes of composition might be expressed as a difference between hypotaxis (subordination, hierarchy, ranking) and parataxis (coordination, juxtaposition), two terms of art that derive from the study of literary syntax.<sup>234</sup> The *Nihāya* wears hypotaxis on its sleeve. Its complex hierarchies steer readers through the maze of chapters and leave them in no doubt as to how things rank. Al-Nuwayrī's organizational approach to Book V—which, as we will see, dispenses with precedent and adopts a new historiographical model—can also be read as a form of hypotaxis. Rather than structure this *fann* annalistically, al-Nuwayrī's thematic-dynastic approach is essentially a hypotactic narration of history.<sup>235</sup> With this criterion in mind, one cannot help but notice that the differences between the *Nihāya* and its encyclopaedic cousins extend beyond the question of size. This characterization is admittedly far too general, given what we know about the flexible character of *adab* works and the difficulties inherent in delimiting an encyclopaedic prototype, but the basic trend sketched out above (and summarized in the table below) is pervasive enough to set apart the *Nihāya*'s own structural arrangement as a significant anomaly.

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<sup>234</sup> The classical example of paratactic syntax is Caesar's famous line "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came, I saw, I conquered," in which the three elements of the sentence are placed on the same syntactic level, giving the reader the impression, as Richard Lanham puts it, that "diagnosing the situation ('I saw') and defeating the enemy ('I conquered') were no more difficult than simply appearing on the scene ('I came')." This is in contrast to hypotaxis, which "lets us know how things rank, what derives from what... Both paratactic and hypotactic styles can work in complex ways but the principle remains the same. Is the ranking done for us (hypotaxis) or left up to us (parataxis)?" (Richard A. Lanham, *Analyzing Prose* 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2003), 29. See also Riedel, "Islamic episteme," 200-245; Christel Meier, "Grundzüge der mittelalterlichen Enzyklopädie. Zu Inhalten, Formen und Funktionen einer problematischen Gattung," in: *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*, eds. Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (Stuttgart: Germanistische Symposien, Berichtsbände 5, 1984), 481.

<sup>235</sup> "One damn thing after another" is an only slightly unfair characterization of many medieval annalistic chronicles, and a nice encapsulation of the essence of parataxis.

**Table 8: Structural arrangement of seven *adab* encyclopaedias<sup>236</sup>**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement</i>
' <i>Uyūn al-akhbār</i> ('The Choicest of Reports') by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) <sup>237</sup>	Four volumes divided into ten books ( <i>kutub</i> ): 1) sovereignty ( <i>al-sultān</i> ); 2) war ( <i>al-ḥarb</i> ); 3) rulership ( <i>al-su'dud</i> ); 4) traits and morals ( <i>al-ṭabā'i' wa-l-akhlāq</i> ); 5) knowledge ( <i>al-'ilm</i> ); 6) piety ( <i>al-zuhd</i> ); 7) friends ( <i>al-ikhwān</i> ); 8) needs ( <i>al-ḥawā'ij</i> ); 9) food ( <i>al-ṭa'ām</i> ) 10) women ( <i>al-nisā'</i> ). Each book contains smaller chapters (sometimes called <i>abwāb</i> , sometimes set off with other types of headings), but these are not numbered.
<i>al-'Iqd al-farīd</i> ('The Unique Necklace') by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi (d. 328/940) <sup>238</sup>	Seven volumes divided into twenty-five books ( <i>kutub</i> ), each named after a precious gem. The books are on the following subjects: 1) sovereignty ( <i>al-sultān</i> ); 2) war ( <i>al-ḥurūb</i> ); 3) generous personages ( <i>al-ajwād</i> ); 4) delegations [of Arab tribes to the Prophet] ( <i>al-wufūd</i> ); 5) addressing kings ( <i>mukhāṭabat al-mulūk</i> ); 6) religious and profane knowledge ( <i>al-'ilm wa-l-adab</i> ); 7) proverbs ( <i>al-amthāl</i> ); 8) moral exhortations and piety ( <i>al-mawā'iz wa-l-zuhd</i> ); 9) funeral orations ( <i>al-ta'āzī wa-l-marāthī</i> ); 10) genealogy and the virtues of the pre-Islamic Arabs ( <i>al-nasab wa-fadā'il al-'arab</i> ); 11) language of the Bedouins ( <i>kalām al-a'rāb</i> ); 12) repartees ( <i>al-ajwiba</i> ); 13) speeches ( <i>al-khuṭab</i> ); 14) epistolography ( <i>al-tawqī'āt wa-l-fuṣūl</i> ); 15) the Caliphs and their histories ( <i>al-khulafā' wa-tawārīkhuhum</i> ); 16) Ziyād and al-Ḥajjāj [and other Umayyad figures] ( <i>akhbār Ziyād wa-l-Ḥajjāj</i> ); 17) the battles of the pre-Islamic Arabs ( <i>ayyām al-'Arab</i> ); 18) virtues of poetry ( <i>faḍā'il al-shi'r</i> ); 19) poetic meters ( <i>a'ārīd al-shi'r</i> ); 20) music ( <i>al-alḥān</i> ); 21) women and their qualities ( <i>al-nisā' wa-ṣifātihinna</i> ); 22) false prophets and pariahs ( <i>al-mutanabbī'īn wa-l-mawsūmīn</i> ); 23) human qualities ( <i>ṭabā'i' al-insān</i> ); 24) food and drink ( <i>al-ṭa'ām wa-l-sharāb</i> ); 25) pleasantries ( <i>al-fukāhāt wa-l-mulāḥ</i> ).

<sup>236</sup> This list of works is based with few modifications on the proposed list of paradigmatic *adab* encyclopaedias in Kilpatrick, "A Genre in Classical Arabic Literature."

<sup>237</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, '*Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa 'l-Miṣriyya 'l-'Āmma li-'l-Ta'līf wa-'l-Tarjama wa-'l-Nashr, 1964). See also G. Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba (mort en 276/89): l'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées* (Damascus, 1965); Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara," 208-38.

<sup>238</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, eds. Aḥmad Amīn et al. (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa-'l-Tarjama wa-'l-Nashr, 1940-53). See also W. Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-'Iqd al-farīd des Andalusiers Ibn 'Abdrabbih (246/860-328/940) : ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin : K. Schwarz, 1983); idem, "Parallelstellen-Verzeichnis zum k. al-'Iqd al-farīd des Ibn 'Abdrabbih (246/860-328/940)," *Oriens* 32 (1990), 375-439.

**Table 8 (cont.): Structural arrangement of seven *adab* encyclopaedias**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement</i>
<i>Zahr al-ādāb wa-thamar al-albāb</i> ('Flower of Literary Arts and Fruit of Hearts') by Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022) <sup>239</sup>	Four volumes containing a huge number of chapters, but no clear organizing principle. The work begins with chapters devoted to sayings of the Prophet and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, but then pursues a haphazard arrangement. <sup>240</sup>
<i>Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā' wa-'l-bulaghā'</i> ('Apt Quotables of the Literati and Conversations of Poets and Eloquent Men') by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (fl. 409/1018) <sup>241</sup>	Four volumes divided into twenty-five divisions ( <i>ḥudūd</i> ) and varying numbers of chapters ( <i>fuṣūl</i> ): (1) intelligence, knowledge, and ignorance and everything related to them (20 chapters); (2) rulership and government (4 chapters); (3) justice and injustice, etc. (6 chapters); (4) giving aid, morals, joking, shame, etc. (7 chapters); (5) praise and disparagement of paternity, etc. (4 chapters); (6) gratitude, praise, extolling, etc. (7 chapters); (7) ambitions, good fortunes, and hopes (3 chapters); (8) occupations, earnings, fickleness, wealth and poverty (7 chapters); (9) asking for gifts and giving gifts (5 chapters); (10) foods, meals, generosity in serving guests and descriptions of foods (6 chapters); (11) drinking and drink, etc. (7 chapters); (12) friendship (3 chapters); (13) dalliance (14 chapters); (14) courage (8 chapters); (15) getting married, wives, divorce, virtue, and being free with one's wife (4 chapters); (16) vulgarity and frivolity (4 chapters); (17) the countenances of human beings and their names (5 chapters); (18) clothing and scent (2 chapters); (19) the disparagement of the world and its trials (2 chapters); (20) religious beliefs and observances (12 chapters); (21) death and its various circumstances (2 chapters); (22) heavens, seasons of the year,

<sup>239</sup> Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thamar al-albāb*, ed. Zakī Mubārak (Cairo: al-Maktaba 'l-Tijāriyya 'l-Kubrā, 1953).

<sup>240</sup> See Hamori, "Anthologies," *EI3*: "The intention to help the reader acquire a fine style is particularly apparent in some *adab* books. Thus, al-Ḥuṣrī's (d. 413/1022) *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thamar al-albāb*, which follows no discernible overall plan, devotes to many topics catalogues of well-polished short phrases in addition to pertinent poetry, prose, and anecdotal material."

<sup>241</sup> Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā' wa-'l-bulaghā'* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1961). On the structure and arrangement of this text, see especially Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara," 168-201, 243-48 (from which the translated titles above are taken), and Riedel "Islamic Episteme," 235-45. For an overview of al-Rāghib's life and works, see Alexander Key, "al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography I*, eds. Mary St. Germain and Terri de Young (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 298-306. See also idem, "A Linguistic Frame of Mind: al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī and What it Meant to be Ambiguous," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012.

**Table 8 (cont.): Structural arrangement of seven *adab* encyclopaedias**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement</i>
	places, waters, plants, trees, and fires (8 chapters); (23) angels and jinn (2 chapters); (24) animals (7 chapters); (25) various different topics (1 chapter).
<i>Bahjat al-majālis wa-uns al-mujālis wa-shaḥḍh al-dhāhin wa-'l-hājis</i> ('The Beauty of Literary Gatherings and the Intimacy of the Litterateur and the Sharpening of the Idea and the Notion') by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1070) <sup>242</sup>	Contains 132 chapters ( <i>abwāb</i> ), with both religious and non-religious material. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr begins each chapter with a verse from the Qur'ān if there is one that is relevant, then a <i>ḥadīth</i> , then poetry and proverbs of the Arabs, Persians, and Greeks. One might superimpose a larger thematic framework on the chapter order, but the basic arrangement is a long string (with no discernible sub-chapters beyond the <i>abwāb</i> ).
<i>Rabī' al-abrār wa-nuṣūṣ al-akhbār</i> ('Springtime of the Pious and the Texts of Reports') by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) <sup>243</sup>	Contains ninety-two chapters ( <i>abwāb</i> ). The standard format is to begin a chapter and recount what the Prophet said about it, then the Companions and Successors, notable believers, etc., then the sages of the Arabs and the Persians and others, then the Hebrew prophets, and finally the poetry. Chapters follow a seemingly thematic order, beginning with more cosmological themes (heaven, earth, elements, time, etc.) and then on to ethical issues.
<i>al-Tadhkira al-Ḥamdūniyya</i> ('The Ḥamdūnī Commonplace Book') by Ibn Ḥamdūn (d. 562/1166) <sup>244</sup>	The title of this work ( <i>tadhkira</i> ) indicates that Ibn Ḥamdūn conceived of it as a commonplace book, however he organized it into fifty chapters ( <i>abwāb</i> ) containing sub-chapters ( <i>fuṣūl</i> ). Iḥsān 'Abbās, argues that the chapters can be divided up into the following thematic categories: (1) Religious sayings (chapters 1-3); (2) ethical topics, such as

<sup>242</sup> Yūsuf b. 'Abdallāh Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis wa-uns al-mujālis wa-shaḥḍh al-dhāhin wa-'l-hājis*, ed. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khulī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya li-'l-Ta'līf wa-'l-Tarjama, 1967-70).

<sup>243</sup> Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī. *Rabī' al-abrār wa-nuṣūṣ al-akhbār*, ed. Salīm al-Nu'aymī (Baghdad: al-Jumhūriyya 'l-'Irāqiyya, Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-'l-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyya, 1976-82.) Ḥājī Khalīfa seemed to think that the arrangement of this work as reflected in the extant manuscripts was not al-Zamakhsharī's, but does not provide proof. The editor of the work is inclined to assume that it was. See also Jean Claude Vadet, "Les grands thèmes de l'adab dans le Rabī' al-abrār d'al-Zamakhsharī," *Revue des études islamiques* 58 (1990): 189-205.

<sup>244</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Ḥamdūn, *al-Tadhkira 'l-Ḥamdūniyya*, eds. Iḥsān 'Abbās and Bakr 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1996).

**Table 8 (cont.): Structural arrangement of seven *adab* encyclopaedias**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement</i>
	miserliness, bravery, cowardice, loyalty, jealousy, honesty, deception, modesty, etc. (chapters 4-16); (3) chapters with a literary-poetic inclination, on praise, congratulation, elegy, invective, description, love poetry, etc. (chapters 17-29); (4) the arts of prose (chapters 30-33); (5) miscellaneous issues that might have been placed in earlier chapters, such as wine, etc. (chapters 34-50). <sup>245</sup>
<i>al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṣraf</i> ('The Exquisite Elements from Every Art Considered Elegant') by al-Ibshīhī (d. 850/1446) <sup>246</sup>	Eighty-four chapters ( <i>abwāb</i> ) with sub-topics, arranged into thematic clusters such as laudable speech (proverbs, rhetoric, prompt repartees, oratory and poetry), politics (sovereignty, ministers, justice, injustice, etc.) ethics (generosity, miserliness, discretion, treachery, etc.) natural history (animals, wonders of creation, jinns, gems, etc.) the good life (wine, music, singers, women, etc.).

While Ibn Qutayba's '*Uyūn al-akhbār*' has generally been seen as the archetypal "adab encyclopaedia"—much in the same vein as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* in the medieval European tradition—recent scholarship has re-cast our understanding of the '*Uyūn* and the works that it apparently inspired.<sup>247</sup> Stephanie Thomas has proposed "a more cautious use of the word 'archetype' to describe '*Uyūn al-akhbār*', and a more cautious use of '*Uyūn al-akhbār* to epitomize 'adab'," arguing that the work is "better

<sup>245</sup> 'Abbās states that this structure was mostly formal (and perhaps artificial?) because of the separation of chapters that could easily have been grouped together. For this reason, the divisions are not spared of interpenetration. He gives the example of chapter 2 on rulers, which cannot be separated from questions of justice (chapter 12) or consultation (chapter 14) or on chamberlains (chapter 41), because all of these subjects are related to politics. See *ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>246</sup> Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṣraf*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000). See also Ulrich Marzolph, "Medieval Knowledge in Modern Reading: A Fifteenth-Century Arabic Encyclopedia of *Omni Re Scibili*," in *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts, Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 407-19; Kelly Tuttle, "Al-Ibshīhī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, eds. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009): 236-42.

<sup>247</sup> See Ribémont, "On the Definition of an Encyclopaedic Genre in the Middle Ages," 54-55.

thought of not as a prototype, but as a type,” one that can be distinguished from other types such as the *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī.<sup>248</sup> The above table helps to substantiate this conjecture, revealing that there is no single conventional organizational pattern uniting even these “paradigmatic” multi-topic *adab* collections (as conventional as, for example, “elements-based ordering in the [European] philosophical encyclopedias of the twelfth century” and “hexaemeral structures at the beginning of the thirteenth”).<sup>249</sup> A general trend can be discerned in some works towards linear chapter sequences grouped by theme (as with al-Zamakhsharī’s *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, which moves from cosmological to ethical topics) but sometimes according to no logic at all (such as al-Ḥuṣrī’s *Zahr al-ādāb*). In al-Rāghib’s *Muḥāḍarāt*, the internal structure is largely hypotactic, which makes the perfect aphorism easy to find, but it is subsumed under an overarching paratactic sequence.<sup>250</sup> Its highest hierarchical level of twenty-five chapters (*ḥudūd*) could be thought of as corresponding to al-Nuwayrī’s intermediate level of twenty-five sections (*aqsām*) but, the order of the *Muḥāḍarāt*’s

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<sup>248</sup> Thomas, “The Concept of Muḥāḍara”, 241. Rather than viewing these works as part of highly conventionalized and monolithic category, Thomas suggests “a progression of *adab* works from an early descriptive stage (monographs, poetry anthologies, the early *adab* encyclopedias) to a stage in which *adab* material is collected for more particular sociocultural or rhetorical purposes.” (212-13) See also Kilpatrick, who argues that encyclopaedic compilations “are on the one hand products of a particular time and sometimes place, and on the other may reveal the individual interests of their compilers.” Idem, “A Genre in Classical Arabic Literature,” 36.

<sup>249</sup> Tomáš Záhora, “The Tropological Universe: Alexander Neckam’s Encyclopedias and the Natures of Things at the Turn of the Thirteenth Century,” Ph.D. diss, Fordham University, 2007, 46.

<sup>250</sup> The *Muḥāḍarāt* is the most hypotactic work of the ones surveyed in the table above, and in this respect is the most similar to al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāya*. Dagmar Riedel has demonstrated that in this text, “different forms of a hypotactic order are subsumed under the overarching paratactic order... al-Rāghib combined parataxis and hypotaxis through organizing the literary excerpts within the individual chapters through a thematic grid of sections and rubrics”; see eadem, “Islamic Episteme,” 234.

chapters does not conform to any recognizable pattern, while the *Nihāya*'s sections are ordered according to the logic of each *fann*.<sup>251</sup> Finally, this text (like Ibn Qutayba's *Uyūn al-akhbār*) is built on three levels of hierarchy, unlike the *Nihāya*, which as we have seen often penetrates to fourth- and fifth-order levels when one takes into account its nested *fuṣūl* and sub-*fuṣūl*.<sup>252</sup>

This survey may seem to be a catalogue of hair-splitting distinctions that do not amount to a difference, but it is my view that structural dynamics are highly determinative of the overall character, outlook, and function of encyclopaedic texts.<sup>253</sup> Structure seems to play a different syntagmatic role in most of these works than it does

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<sup>251</sup> Franz Rosenthal sees in the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s order of chapters a shift in the importance of statecraft (which appeared first in the *Uyūn al-akhbār*'s chapter order), having been supplanted by a chapter on knowledge (see Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 271). Stephanie Thomas largely agrees with Rosenthal's view with a few caveats (see Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara," 223-24). Dagmar Riedel interestingly shows how the twenty-five chapters of the *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'* can be grouped according to two different sets of themes, one conforming to the logic of *ordo rerum*, and the other according to *ordo atrium*, and also takes issue with the notion that a paratactic sequence can reflect a declining order of significance; see Riedel, "Islamic episteme," 238-39. On *ordo rerum* and *ordo artium* ("traditional conceptions of the order of the world" vs. "rational and scientific approaches to knowledge, i.e. on disciplines or on a system of sciences," respectively) see Meier, "Organisation of Knowledge and Encyclopaedic Ordo," 104.

<sup>252</sup> As discussed earlier, different types of hierarchy engender different modes of reading and presentation of content. In "The Concept of Muḥāḍara," Stephanie Thomas compares two parallel sections of *Uyūn al-akhbār* and *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, namely the *kitāb al-ṭa'ām* ('The Book of Food') in the former and *al-ḥadd al-āshir fī 'l-aṭ'ima wa-'l-ukala wa-'l-qirā wa-awsāf al-aṭ'ima* ('The Tenth Division, on Foods, Gluttons, Generosity, and Descriptions of Foods'), in the latter. She argues that the two titles "do not convey information in the same way," as al-Rāghib's syntax "is symbolic of the open, proliferating tenor of his work, as is Ibn Qutayba's use of the single noun in a possessive construct with *kitāb* emblematic of his more closed, hierarchical approach." (217) Semantically, she says, "the statement 'A is about B' has a more neutral taxonomic effect and does not convey the same moral authority that the construct *Kitāb al-ṭa'ām* does." (219)

<sup>253</sup> Along these lines, Nadia El Cheikh has argued: "One constant of *adab* is that it is the work of a compiler whose repertoire is more or less fixed...The originality of a particular text exists precisely in the choice of the reproduced texts, in their arrangement, their nuanced re-writing and in the new contexts where they are inserted." (Idem, "In Search for an Ideal Spouse," 182)

in the *Nihāya*: it does not posit similarly complex relations of thematic subordination and hierarchy. As Tomáš Záhora has argued, medieval encyclopaedic texts tend to be very conservative: structural templates evolve slowly, and one must be attuned to recognize “subtle changes and shifts of emphasis” when placing these works in their relative contexts.<sup>254</sup> These changes and shifts are, in the case of the *Nihāya* and the *adab* tradition, not terribly subtle. They mark out this work as a significant deviation from a recognizable textual paradigm, which partly explains why it was not recognized by its medieval readers as a member of that paradigm, and raises questions about why al-Nuwayrī claimed it as one.

There is one final compositional difference between the *Nihāya* and the *adab* works surveyed above that is worth considering briefly. While earlier works were largely composed of “literary microunits” (i.e., snippets, statements, anecdotes, what Abd el-Fattah Kilito refers to as “discours rapporté”), the *Nihāya* is a concatenation of written sources: epistles, whole chapters, even abridgments of entire works.<sup>255</sup> As I will discuss in Chapter 4, this represents an important hallmark of Mamluk encyclopaedism, the working methods of its authors, and the authoritative status of written testimony.<sup>256</sup> In al-Nuwayrī, we have a fundamentally bookish compiler, one who does not shy away from recounting his personal experiences, but who sees his role as one of

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<sup>254</sup> Záhora, “The Tropological Universe,” 46.

<sup>255</sup> Abd el-Fattah Kilito, “Le genre ‘Séance’: une introduction,” *Studia Islamica* 63 (1976): 34; Malti-Douglas, “Structure and organization,” 228.

<sup>256</sup> As Hilary Kilpatrick notes, “The principle of oral transmission, whether real or fictitious, has been abandoned, except where it occurs within the sources used; the written word and the spoken are now on an equal footing as sources.” Eadem, “A genre in classical Arabic literature,” 37.



dismantling, editing, and re-constituting other sources to fit his own synthetic vision. As we will see in the *Nihāya*'s preface, al-Nuwayrī regarded the oral transmission of knowledge as an ineffective method for navigating a literary patrimony. Written consultation (*muṭālaʿa wa-murājaʿa*) had long since become the order of the day.

### Textual Topographies

My approach thus far has been to adopt a bird's-eye view, squinting at the *Nihāya* from a position where its broadest contours are visible and its most minute idiosyncrasies are, for the moment, hidden. This analytical remove is serviceable for a study of structural features, but can it be used to assess the thornier matter of contents? After all, what can be made out from this elevated perspective is little more than the general composition of the work: the relative size of its parts and their position within the text. Size and position, however, are far from being ancillary to the study of contents; they are precisely where we must begin.

Position is straightforward enough to determine, given what was said earlier about al-Nuwayrī's fidelity to his table of contents; we don't have to worry about serpents insinuating themselves between elephants and lions. But how to quantify size? Here, the tidily-arranged catalogue of subjects in the table of contents is of little use: it tells us nothing about the relative size of books, sections, and chapters, which varies substantially across the work. The *Nihāya*'s first chapter (on the creation of the heavens) is also its shortest one, fitting on a single manuscript folio.<sup>257</sup> Its last chapter (on the history of Egypt from the Abbasids to the Mamluks) is nearly two thousand

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<sup>257</sup> *Nihāya*, 1:28, (DKI 1:21).

times as long and spans six volumes.<sup>258</sup> The work's formal elegance and symmetry belie the uneven distribution of its contents.

Here again, structure provides a solution. The *Nihāya*'s architecture and thematic modularity enable its contents to be effectively 'parsed', using the simple method of word counts. Al-Nuwayrī's insistence on arranging his material into discrete and thematically homogenous classificatory boxes means, among other things, that these boxes can be measured and compared, allowing us to perceive which subject areas, disciplines, and categories are most (and least) represented in the *Nihāya*. In other words, it is precisely the fact of the *Nihāya*'s architectural transparency and internal consistency that enables us to perceive the swollen heft of certain subject areas alongside the trifling presence of others. Such an approach is not so straightforward in the case of a more interpenetrated and digressive work, where subjects meld seamlessly into others. Al-Nuwayrī's categories, on the whole, stand to be counted.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 28:11–33:320 (DKI 28:3–33:243).

<sup>259</sup> Why bother with word counts rather than page counts? Due to the vagaries of margins, layouts, and footnotes, printed pages are a notoriously imprecise way to arrive at a sense of the relative size of a work's constitutive elements. For example, the newest edition of the *Nihāya* published by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya has Book III at 308 pages. The standard edition, published over several decades by Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, has the same book at 510 pages, a startling discrepancy borne of diligent (overzealous?) editing. Meanwhile, both editions print Book I at around 375 pages, which means that editorial apparatuses are inconsistent across the same edition. Word counts represent the most exact way to determine the size of a medieval text's divisions, and thanks to the digitization of many of these texts, this method (along with myriad other modes of data mining) is now available to researchers. I am grateful to Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya for making available to me an electronic version of the *Nihāya* without the scholarly apparatus included. After several starts and stops (realizing that I needed to remove all punctuation, page markers, and other characters) I was able to produce a digital version of the work that could be scanned accurately by the word count tool in Microsoft Word.

Some may suggest that this approach to the question of contents is not just simple but simplistic, that it reduces the *Nihāya*'s marvelous multitudes to a sterile accounting of its internal dimensions. This may be true, but we must recognize that such an accounting has never been performed with any precision. One would be hard pressed to find, in any of the studies devoted to the *Nihāya*, a detailed breakdown of the relative size and internal arrangement of the work's books, sections, and chapters. If we can begin by doing this very simple thing, we will have gone a significant way towards understanding what this work that aims for comprehensiveness is comprehensive of. And there are very few things, I would suggest, more relevant to a study of an encyclopaedic text than that.

### **By the Numbers: Mapping the Content of the *Nihāya***

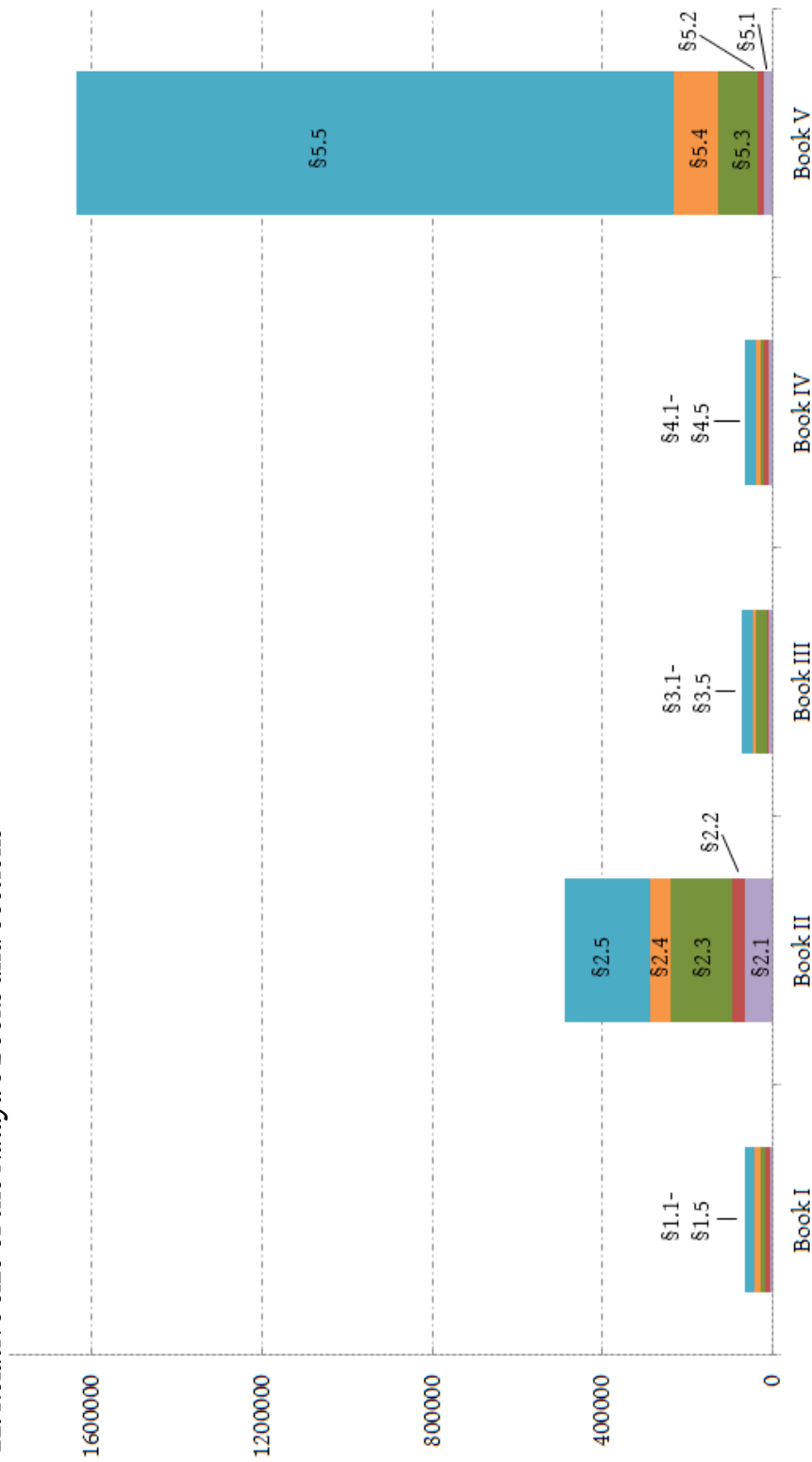
The reader will recall that most of al-Nuwayrī's biographers referred to the *Nihāya* as a work of history, and some mistakenly claimed that al-Nuwayrī composed two thirty-volume works (one on history and the other on *adab*). This is because the *Nihāya*'s fifth book is over twice as long as the preceding four combined. It is a universal history, beginning with God's creation of Adam and Eve, and going all the way through the final years of al-Nuwayrī's life. The disparities in size between the various components of the *Nihāya* reveal two fundamental features of its composition. The first is the centrality of history; the second is the significant difference in the size of Book II vis-à-vis Books I, III, and IV. These disparities are the result of al-Nuwayrī's amendments and additions to the work of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāṭ's (d. 718/1318) *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar* ('Delightful Concepts and Paths to Precepts'), which served as the template for the

*Nihāya*, as I discuss in Chapter 4. Although the material that al-Nuwayrī took from al-Waṭwāṭ accounted for less than 10% of the total text, the overall structural paradigm that he uses came from the *Mabāhij*, and is preserved largely intact within the *Nihāya*. The graphs below provide a visual representation of the shape of al-Nuwayrī's work (Figure 1), along with detailed snapshots of the internal arrangement of its five books (Figures 12-16).<sup>260</sup>

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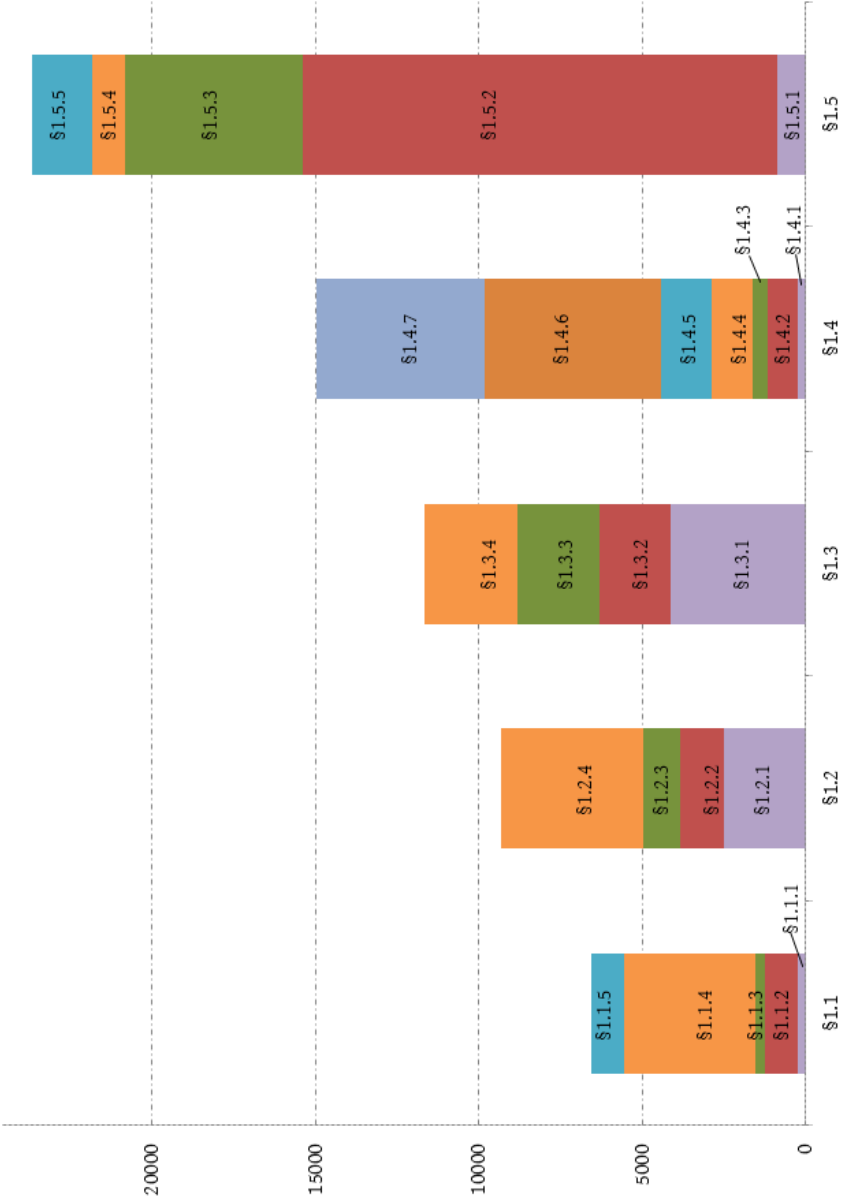
<sup>260</sup> The colors in the graphs below are meant to set the sections and chapters apart from each other. They do not signify anything else.

Figure 11: Relative size of the *Nihāya*'s Books and Sections<sup>261</sup>



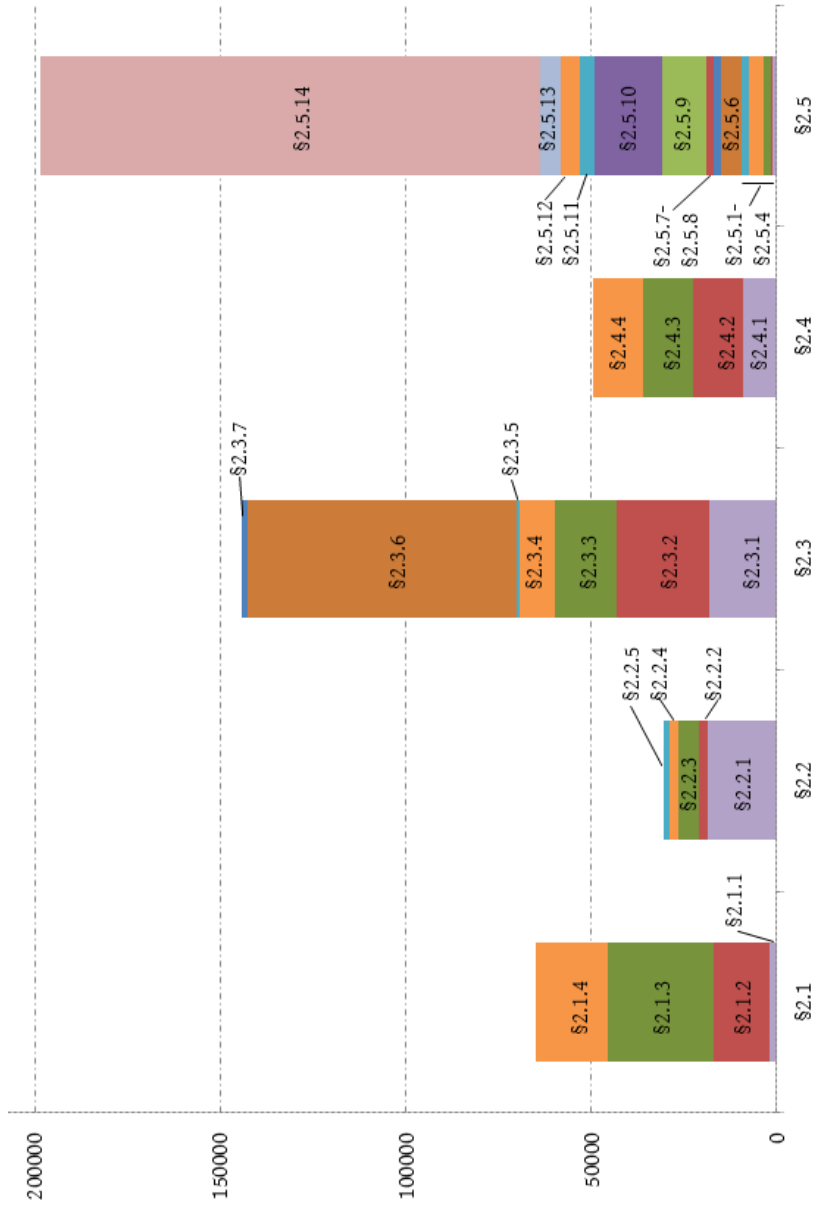
<sup>261</sup> Key to section titles: \$1.1 Heavens; \$1.2 Meteorological phenomena; \$1.3 Units of time, holidays, feasts; \$1.4 Physical geography; \$1.5 Human geography; \$2.1 Etymology, morphology, genealogy; \$2.2 Pre-islamic proverbs, stories; \$2.3 Poetry, wine, music; \$2.4 Congratulatory, elegies, etc.; \$2.5 Rulers and scribes; \$3.1 Carnivores; \$3.2 Other wild beasts; \$3.3 Livestock; \$3.4 Venomous creatures; \$3.5 Birds, fish, insects, hunting implements; \$4.1 Plant origin, soil, foodstuffs, vegetables; \$4.2 Trees and fruit; \$4.3 Aromatic flowers; \$4.4 Gardens, flowers, resins, manna; \$4.5 Perfumery, distillates, sexual medicines; \$5.1 Adam and Eve to People of the Ditch; \$5.2 Stories of Ibrāhīm and others; \$5.3 Stories of Mūsā and others; \$5.4 Kings of China, Persia, etc.; \$5.5 Islamic history

Figure 12: Internal Arrangement of *Nihāya* Book I<sup>262</sup>



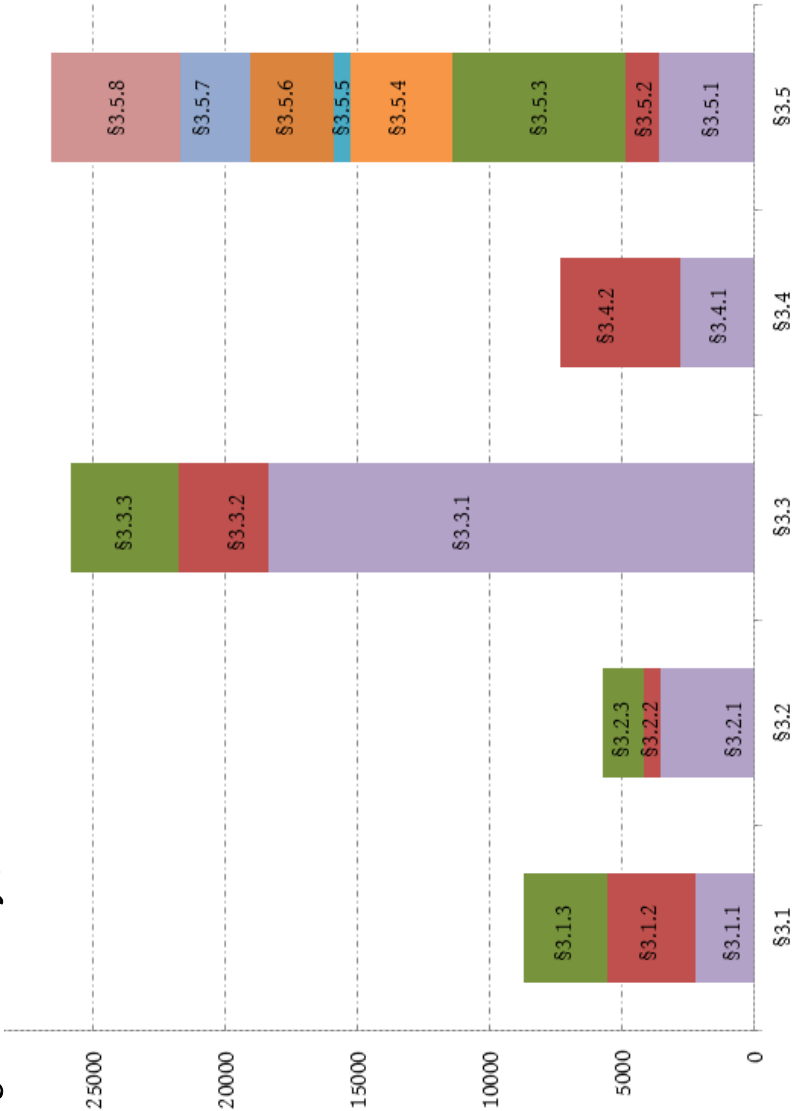
<sup>262</sup> Guide to chapter numbers: \$1.1.1 Creation of the heavens; \$1.1.2 Configuration of the heavens; \$1.1.3 On the angels; \$1.1.4 The seven planets; \$1.1.5 The fixed stars; \$1.2.1 Clouds, snow, hail; \$1.2.2 Comets, thunder, lightning; \$1.2.3 Wind; \$1.2.4 Fire; \$1.3.1 Nights and days; \$1.3.2 Months and years; \$1.3.3 Natural seasons; \$1.3.4 Festivals and holidays; \$1.4.1 Creation of the Earth; \$1.4.2 Names of the Earth; \$1.4.3 Size of the Earth; \$1.4.4 The seven climes; \$1.4.5 Mountains; \$1.4.6 Seas and islands; \$1.4.7 Rivers, streams, and springs; \$1.5.1 Lands and people; \$1.5.2 Qualities of the lands; \$1.5.3 Ancient buildings; \$1.5.4 Descriptions of fortresses; \$1.5.5 Descriptions of palaces.

Figure 13: Internal Arrangement of *Nihāya*, Book II<sup>263</sup>



<sup>263</sup> Guide to chapter titles: \$2.1.1 Etymology, names, life stages of the human being; \$2.1.2 Poetry on morphology; \$2.1.3 Amorous poetry; \$2.1.4 Genealogy; \$2.2.1 Proverbs; \$2.2.2 Superstitions of pre-Islamic Arabs; \$2.2.3 Soothsayers, etc.; \$2.2.4 Euphemisms, metonymies, etc; \$2.2.5 Enigmas and riddles; \$2.3.1 On praise; \$2.3.2 On invective; \$2.3.3 Entertaining anecdotes; \$2.3.4 Wine; \$2.3.5 Boon companions; \$2.3.6 Music; \$2.3.7 Singers; \$2.4.1 Congratulations and glad tidings; \$2.4.2 Elegies; \$2.4.3 Asceticism; \$2.4.4 Prayers of invocation; \$2.5.1 Conditions of leadership; \$2.5.2 Qualities of the ruler; \$2.5.3 What is owed to the ruler; \$2.5.4 Commandments of rulers; \$2.5.5 What is owed to the subjects; \$2.5.6 Good statecraft; \$2.5.7 Consultation; \$2.5.8 Safeguarding secrets; \$2.5.9 Advisors; \$2.5.10 Armies and war; \$2.5.11 Judges and governors; \$2.5.12 Courts; \$2.5.13 Supervision of moral behavior; \$2.5.14 Scribes and secretaryship.

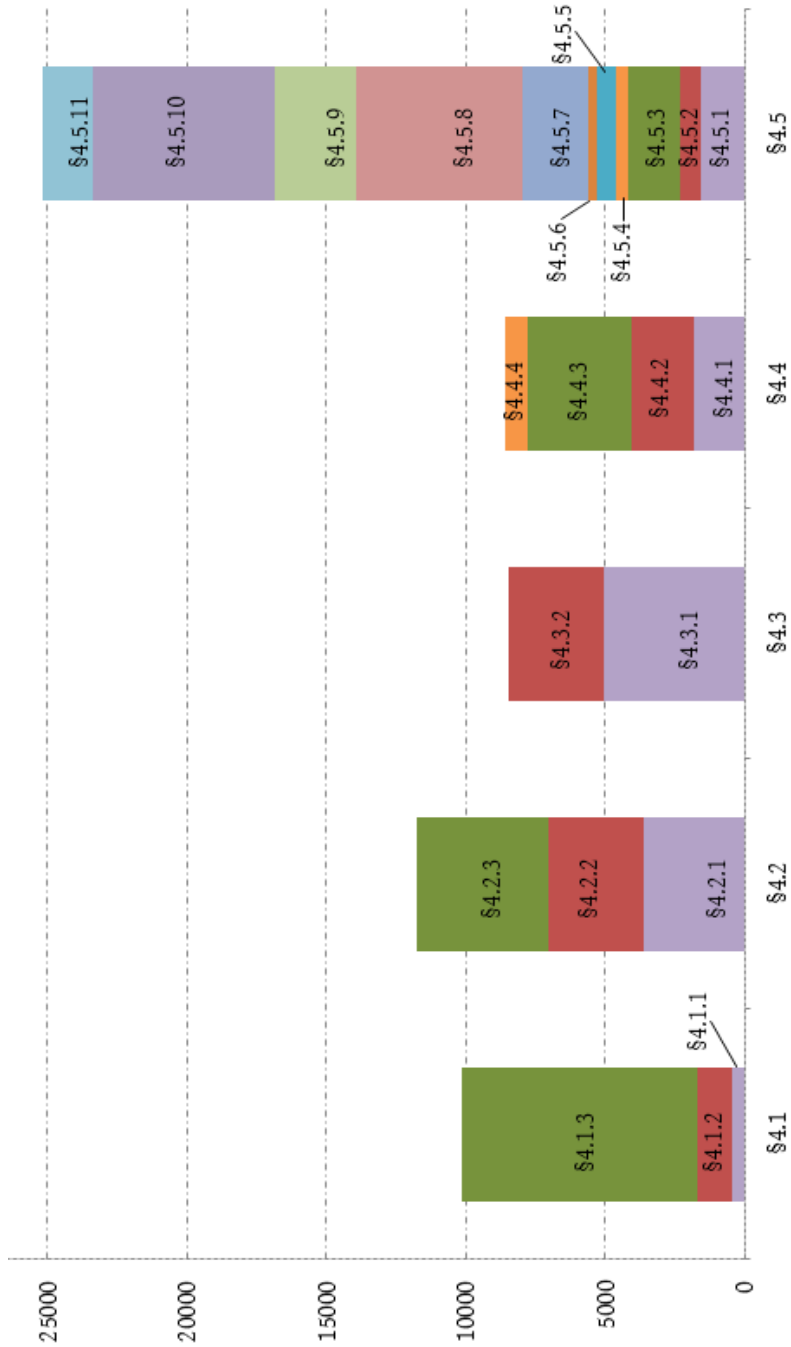
Figure 14: Internal Arrangement of *Nihāya*, Book III<sup>264</sup>



<sup>264</sup> Guide to chapter titles: \$3.1.1 Lion, tiger, panther; \$3.1.2 Cheetah, dog, wolf, hyena, Egyptian mongoose.; \$3.1.3 Grey squirrel, fox, bear, cat, pig.; \$3.2.1 Elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, oryx, deer; \$3.2.2 Wild ass, mountain goat, Saharan oryx; \$3.2.3 Gazelle, hare, monkey, ostrich; \$3.3.1 Horse; \$3.3.2 Mule and donkey; \$3.3.3 Camel, cattle, sheep, goats; \$3.4.1 Deadly venomous creatures; \$3.4.2 Deadly non-venomous creatures; \$3.5.1 Carnivorous birds, i.e. eagles, goshawks, Saker falcons, Peregrine falcons; \$3.5.2 Scavenger birds, i.e. vulture, Egyptian vulture, kite, crow; \$3.5.3 Herbivorous birds, i.e. francolin, bustard, peacock, cock, hen, goose, duck, flamingo, swallow, starling, quail, hoopoe, magpie, sparrow; \$3.5.4 Common birds, i.e. turtle-dove, palm dove, ring dove, stock dove, parrot; \$3.5.5 Nocturnal birds, i.e. bat, Karawān, owl, screech-owl; \$3.5.6 Winged insects, i.e. bee, hornet, spider, locust, silk work, fly, gnat, mosquito; \$3.5.7 Fish; \$3.5.8 Hunting implements.

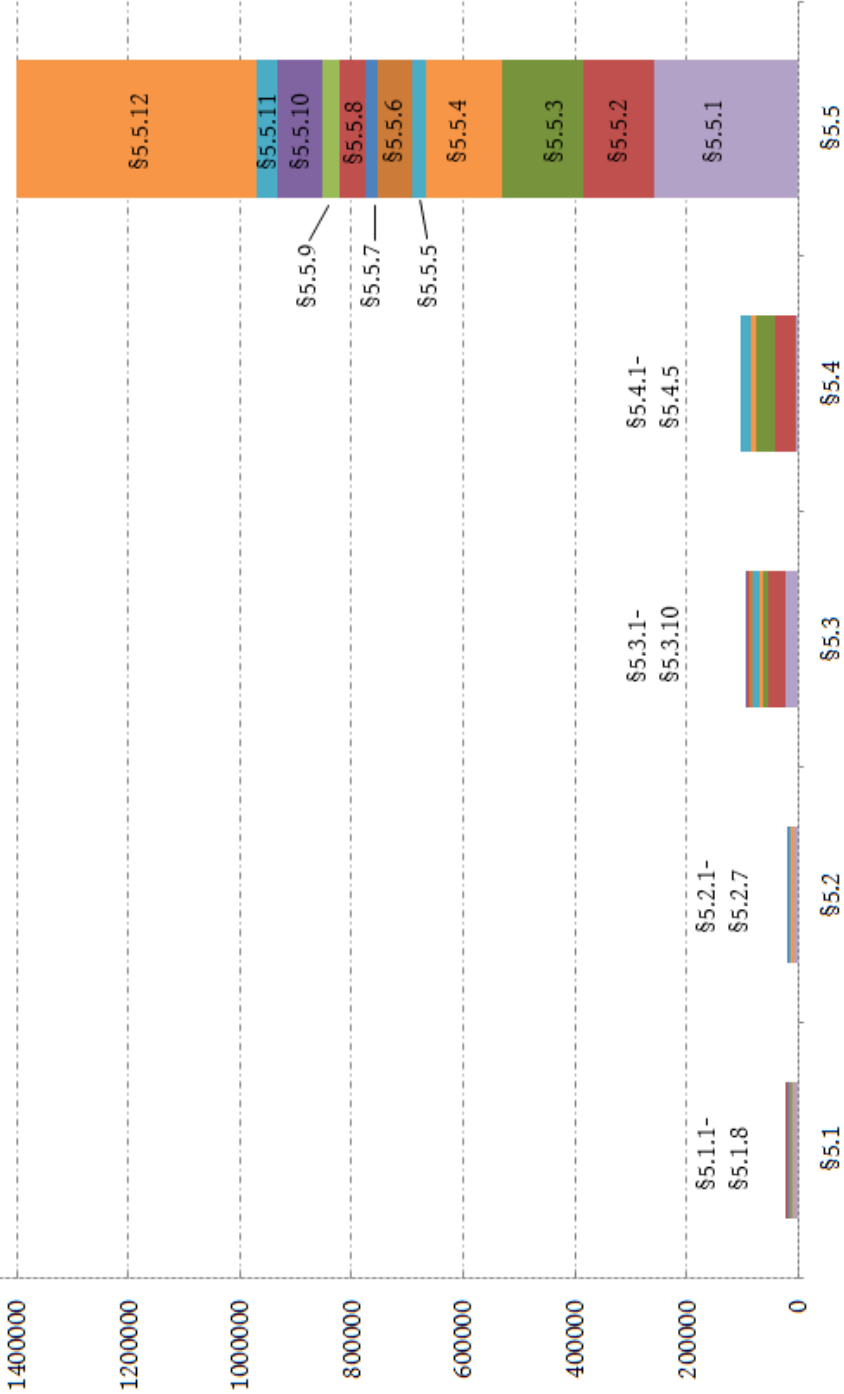


Figure 15: Internal Arrangement of *Nīhāya*, Book IV<sup>265</sup>



<sup>265</sup> Guide to chapter titles; \$4.1.1 Origin of plants; \$4.1.2 Soils; \$4.1.3 Foodstuffs and vegetables; \$4.2.1 Fruit with inedible peel; \$4.2.2 Fruit with inedible stone; \$4.2.3 Fruit with no peel or stone; \$4.3.1 Distillable aromatics; \$4.3.2 Non-distillable aromatics; \$4.4.1 Gardens; \$4.4.2 Flowers; \$4.4.3 Gum resins; \$4.4.4 Mannas; \$4.5.1 Musk; \$4.5.2 Ambergris; \$4.5.3 Aromatic wood; \$4.5.4 Sandal wood; \$4.5.5 Spikenard and clove; \$4.5.6 Costus; \$4.5.7 Galia moscata etc.; \$4.5.8 Compound perfumes; \$4.5.9 Other perfumes; \$4.5.10 Sexual medicines; \$4.5.11 Sympathetic qualities

Figure 16: Internal Arrangement of *Nihāya*, Book V<sup>266</sup>



<sup>266</sup> Guide to chapter titles: \$5.1.1-\$5.1.8 From Adam and Eve to the People of the Ditch; \$5.2.1-\$5.2.7 Ibrahīm and other prophets; \$5.3.1-\$5.3.10 Mūsā and other prophets; \$5.4.1-\$5.4.5 On the kings of Persia, China, and the pre-Islamic Arabs; \$5.5.1 On the Prophet Muḥammad; \$5.5.1 On the caliphs after him; \$5.5.3 On the Umayyad state; \$5.5.4 On the Abbasid state in Iraq; \$5.5.5 On the Umayyad state in al-Andalus; \$5.5.6 On Ifrīqiyya and the Maghrib; \$5.5.7 Between the Umayyads and Abbasids; \$5.5.8 Zanj, Qarāmiṭa, etc; \$5.5.9 Kings of Khurāsān, Transoxania, etc.; \$5.5.10 Rulers of Iraq, Mosul, etc.; \$5.5.11 Khwārazmid and Chingizid states; \$5.5.12 On the rulers of Egypt from the Abbasids up to al-Nuwayrī's life

**Table 9: Word count by Book (*fann*)**

§	Book title	vol./pp.	word count	%
1	Heaven and Earth	1:27 – 1:416	66,158	3%
2	The Human Being	2:1 – 9:222	488,390	21%
3	Animals	9:224 – 10:354	74,481	3%
4	Plants	11:1 – 12:231	64,560	3%
5	History	13:1 – 33:320	1,635,735	70%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1:27-33:320</b>	<b>2,329,324</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 10: Section (*qism*) word count ordered by size**

§	Section title	words	%	
5.5	Islamic history	1401933	60.3%	} 75%
2.5	On rulers, advisors, scribes, etc.	198459	8.5%	
2.3	Praise, invective, wine, music, etc.	144125	6.2%	
5.4	Kings of China, Persia, etc. and <i>Jāhiliyya</i>	102613	4.4%	} 25%
5.3	Stories of Mūsā, et al	92099	4.0%	
2.1	Etymology, morphology, genealogy, etc.	64883	2.8%	
2.4	Congratulations, elegies, etc.	49603	2.1%	
2.2	Pre-Islamic proverbs, practices, stories, etc.	30578	1.3%	
3.5	Birds, fish, insect, hunting implements	26610	1.1%	
3.3	Livestock	25835	1.1%	
4.5	Perfumery, distillates, sexual medicines	25177	1.1%	
1.5	Human geography	23662	1.0%	
5.1	From Adam and Eve to People of the Ditch	19962	0.9%	
5.2	Stories of Ibrāhīm, et al	17328	0.7%	
1.4	Physical geography	14952	0.6%	
4.2	Trees and fruit	11722	0.5%	
1.3	Units of time, holidays, feasts	11673	0.5%	
4.1	Plant origin, soil, foodstuffs, vegetables	10155	0.4%	
1.2	Meteorological phenomena	9304	0.4%	
3.1	Carnivores	8736	0.4%	
4.4	Gardens, flowers, resins, mannas	8572	0.4%	
4.3	Aromatic flowers	8457	0.4%	
3.4	Venomous creatures	7315	0.3%	
1.1	Heavens	6559	0.3%	
3.2	Other wild beasts	5732	0.3%	

**Table 11: The *Nihāya*'s ten largest chapters, ordered by size**

§	Chapter title	vol./pp.	word count	%
5.5.12	Egyptian history (8 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> c.)	28:11	431062	18.5%
5.5.1	Life of the Prophet Muḥammad	16:2	258953	11.1%
5.5.3	The Umayyad state (Syria)	20:239	144218	6.2%
5.5.4	The Abbasid state (Iraq & Egypt)	22:9	136413	5.9%
2.5.14	Scribes and secretaryship	7:1	134865	5.8%
5.5.2	The Rightly-Guided Caliphs	19:7	127369	5.5%
5.5.10	Rulers of Iraq, Mosul, Syria, etc.	26:123	79856	3.4%
2.3.6	Music	4:160	72545	3.1%
5.5.6	Ifriqiyya and the Maghrib	24:5	61035	2.6%
5.5.8	Zanj, Qarāmiṭa, Khawārij, etc.	25:104	46961	2.0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,493,277</b>	<b>64.2%</b>

The textual architecture that al-Nuwayrī inherited from al-Waṭwāṭ was designed to navigate a multi-topic compendium with relatively small chapters such as those found in the *Mabāhij* (which are typically around 2000-3000 words long, fitting on 4-5 manuscript folios). The two *funūn* that al-Nuwayrī added to al-Waṭwāṭ's original model make up over 90% of the *Nihāya* and contain chapters that are much, much larger. If textual navigation was a priority for al-Nuwayrī, as I've argued above, how did he envision his readers accessing this material?

In addressing this question, it is important to first establish that while Books II and V are indeed much larger than the Books I, III, and IV, their internal arrangement is more uneven. As is apparent in Figure 16, the first two sections of Book V (§5.1-§5.2) are comprised of chapters with the same average size as those in the books that al-Nuwayrī took from al-Waṭwāṭ, and so the basic *fann-qism-bāb* system remains an

effective means of navigation. It is only in the last three sections that the chapters begin to grow exceptionally large, culminating in the enormous final chapter (§5.5.12), which alone makes up nearly a fifth of the entire *Nihāya*. Book II is similarly uneven: about half of its chapters are comparable in size to those in the *Mabāhij*, while the rest are significantly larger. Incidentally, Book II and Book V each have two chapters that collectively make up around 40% of each *fann*: §2.3.6 (on music) and §2.5.14 (on scribes and secretaryship) for Book II, and §5.5.1 (on the Prophet Muḥammad’s biography) and §5.5.12 (on Egyptian history) in Book V.

How did al-Nuwayrī imagine that the largest chapters of the *Nihāya* would be read? In many cases, the arrangement established by the table of contents extends beyond books, sections, and chapters and into the domain of sub-chapters and even sub-sub-chapters (as we saw earlier in the case of §3.3.1, the chapter on the horse that al-Nuwayrī added to Book III).<sup>267</sup> While these *fuṣūl* are not numbered, they are generally set off in the text with rubricated titles and running headers, which makes them easy to consult (see Appendix C). Furthermore, there are organizational schemes that can be observed nestled within the main architecture that provide alternative means of textual navigation when the broader hierarchy does not parse the work’s contents finely enough. A sub-chapter on pre-Islamic Arabic proverbs (§2.2.1.7) that spans over 100 pages and contains 34 sub-sub-chapters is arranged alphabetically, following the pattern of the work it draws upon (al-Maydānī’s *Amthāl*).<sup>268</sup> Other chapters contain

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<sup>267</sup> See Table 5, above.

<sup>268</sup> The first twenty-nine chapters are arranged alphabetically, (with an extra one on proverbs beginning with the word *lā*). The final five follow a thematic pattern. See *Nihāya*, 3:1-115 (DKI: 3:8-111, §§2.2.1.7.1-2.2.1.7.34).

lengthy titles in which all of the individual *fuṣūl* are listed in the order in which they will appear in the text, which further aids navigation.<sup>269</sup>

In the fifth book on history, where single chapters swell to the size of entire volumes, al-Nuwayrī introduces a form of textual navigation that seems to have been unprecedented in Islamic historiography. Rather than structure this *fann* according to the widely prevalent annalistic arrangement, he opts for a different method, which he outlines in the preface to Book V:

When I saw that all those who wrote the history of the Muslims had adopted the annalistic form rather than that of dynastic history, I realized that by this method the reader was being deprived of the pleasure of an event which held his preference and of an affair which he might discover. The chronicles of the year draw to a close in a way which denies awareness of all the phases of an event. The historian changes the year and passes from east to west, from peace to war, by the very fact of passing from one year to another ... The account of events is displaced and becomes remote. The reader can only follow an episode which interests him with great difficulty... I have chosen to present history by dynasties and I shall not leave one of them until I have recounted its history from beginning to end, giving the sum of its battles and its achievements, the history of its kings, of its kingdom and of its highways.<sup>270</sup>

These remarks, along with the various navigational mechanisms embedded within the *Nihāya* provide additional evidence for al-Nuwayrī's interest in the ways that

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<sup>269</sup> See for example *Nihāya* 4:76 (DKI: 4:74, §2.3.4): "On wine and its prohibition, afflictions (*āfāt*), crimes (*jināyāt*), and names. And on the stories of those who abstained from it during the Jāhiliyya and those among the nobles who were punished for [consuming] it, on those who were famous for drinking wine, and behaved dissolutely in public because of it. And on the good poetry declaimed about it, and the descriptions of its instruments and containers, and what has been said about pursuing pleasure, and descriptions of the drinking soirées (*al-majālis*), and other things along these lines."

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 13:2-3 (DKI: 13-2); this passage is translated in Chapoutot-Remadi, "al-Nuwayrī," *EI*2. See also Donald Little, *Introduction to Mamluk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1970), 31; *idem*, "The historical and historiographical significance of the detention of Ibn Taymiyya," 315.

different forms of textual arrangement engender diverse modes of reading. The annalistic form of historiographical narrative, as he notes, makes for a disjointed read.<sup>271</sup> The dynastic arrangement *thematizes* its historical material, arranging it into topical divisions, much like the rest of the work. A reader interested in the history of the Mongol Empire, for instance, need not reconstruct it over the course of ten volumes. In the *Nihāya*, the entire history is contained within a 150-page section in a single volume, leading one to suspect that this structural innovation contributed to the popularity of al-Nuwayrī's work: readers could copy certain volumes of the work selectively, based on their individual interests.<sup>272</sup> Similarly, cosmographical and geographical topics are contained within a single volume; zoological and botanical material within three and a half volumes; scribal practice receives a mini-monograph of its own at the end of Book II, etc. Each volume ends at a natural break in the work's internal architecture, evidence that al-Nuwayrī assumed that many of his readers would engage with his work on a volume-by-volume basis, rather than consuming it whole, a time-consuming and expensive proposition.

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<sup>271</sup> We might caricature the annalistic historiographical style as follows: "On the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month of Rajab in the year 692, the sultan had his chamberlain arrested and brought to the palace. Wheat prices on this day were ten *dirhams* per bushel, the rulers of Aḥmadabād and Iskandarabād prepared to send their armies onto the battlefield, a bridge collapsed in Naṣīmabād, and a fire consumed the marketplace of Ilyāsabād. The following fifteen important people died on this day, and the following envoys arrived from foreign capitals, etc..." In order to find out the result of the battle between the armies of Aḥmadabād and Iskandarabād or what agreements were signed between the sultan and the visiting dignitaries, the reader would have to flip ahead several dozen pages through the other notable events of the day, arriving at the next day's entry where he might pick up the relevant thread again.

<sup>272</sup> This form of organization enables modern scholars to trace more easily the portions of the *Nihāya* that were of greater interest to certain readers than others. We can do this by surveying the manuscript record and determining which volumes are most prevalent, where they travelled, who owned them, when they were copied, etc. This methodology is not amenable to many other types of multi-volume reference works such as dictionaries or annalistically arranged chronicles, because of their paratactic arrangement.

Al-Nuwayrī's decision to parse the historical material as he did reflects a second, parallel mode of reading alongside the targeted access engendered by cross-referencing and compact chapters. The larger unbroken chapters were probably intended to be read in their entirety, such that the reader would not be "deprived of the pleasure of an event which held his preference and of an affair which he might discover." Perhaps it is still not too difficult to imagine, in our present age of rapid information access, that a reader would immerse himself in several hundred pages of a historical text, rather than cherry-picking a line of poetry from a well-organized literary compendium. Al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāya*, it seems, offered both modes of engagement.

## Conclusion

Some scholars have sought to read larger civilizational value systems into the structural schemes of compilatory texts.<sup>273</sup> I am not prepared to advance any such claims. However, when one takes into account the years that al-Nuwayrī spent laboring over the *Nihāya*, carefully selecting his sources and arranging his materials, one cannot but help read into his choices of what to include, exclude, and how to distribute the work's contents a clear purpose. Is it not worth pondering, for instance, the fact that his discussion of famous singing slave girls in §2.3.6 is ten times as long as his chapter on the planets (§1.1.4)? Or, that there is hardly any discussion of mathematics or theology but extensive treatments of practical medicine and *ḥadīth*? The internal consistency and deliberate construction of the work give us license to read its

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<sup>273</sup> See Pellat, "Les encyclopédies dans le monde arabe"; Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara, 222-23; and Riedel, "Islamic Episteme," 234, for a minority report.



presences and absences as part of a self-conscious program, just as the *Nihāya*'s pretensions to comprehensiveness inflect the knowledge that it does *not* include. One can speak, in other words, of the negative space of such a text, a conceptual realm that is more clearly demarcated than in the case of other less self-consciously expansive works.

Just as intriguing as the largest chapters (and the nonexistent chapters), I would argue, are the *Nihāya*'s shortest chapters. Why would al-Nuwayrī have composed five chapters in Book V that are each less than 1000 words long and five chapters that are over 100,000 words long?<sup>274</sup> Why not spread out the material more evenly or introduce some additional levels of intra-chapter divisions to break up the content of the larger chapters into more manageable pieces? Could it be that he simply did not have the foresight to do this, or that textual architecture was not an issue that al-Nuwayrī took very seriously? The evidence suggests otherwise, as I have already discussed.<sup>275</sup> How to explain, then, the equivalent hierarchical status given to subjects that are treated in radically different ways, such as history vs. cosmography (§5.0 vs. §1.0), wild beasts vs. statecraft (§3.2 vs. §2.5), or Seth and his children vs. the Prophet's *sīra* (§5.1.2 vs.

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<sup>274</sup> The short chapters are §5.1.2 (Seth and his children), §5.1.7 (*Aṣḥāb al-bi'r*), §5.2.3 (the prophet Iṣḥāq), §5.2.6 (the prophet Dhū 'l-Kifl), and §5.3.9 (on the aftermath of Jesus's death). The long chapters are §5.5.1 (on the Prophet Muḥammad's biography), §5.5.2 (on the stories of the caliphs after him), §5.5.3 (on the Umayyad state in Syria), §5.5.4 (on the Abbasid state in Iraq and Egypt), and §5.5.12 (on Egyptian history up to al-Nuwayrī's lifetime). In the case of several shorter chapters in §5.3, the likely reason for their relative brevity is the fact that they may have been later additions to the *Nihāya*, which is why al-Nuwayrī described them as part of an addendum (*dhayl*).

<sup>275</sup> Al-Nuwayrī states in the preface to the historical *fann* that he has maintained the same architectural pattern of five sections that he followed in the earlier books because for simplicity and consistency's sake (*wa-jaraytu fī taqṣīm hādha 'l-fann 'alā 'l-qā'ida allatī taqaddamat fīmā qablahu min al-funūn li-yakun absaṭ li-'l-nufūs wa-anṣaṭ li-'l-khawāṭir wa-aqarr li-'l-uyūn*). See *Nihāya* 13:3 (DKI: 13:6).

§5.5.1)? This is a question that should be examined in the framework of the epistemological vision of the world that al-Nuwayrī's work advances, as I discuss in the next chapter. A fuller understanding of the shape of the *Nihāya* allows us to pose more incisive questions about the work's contents. What did *adab* mean to al-Nuwayrī, and what was its relation to history? What social status did this material have, and what epistemological outlook does it reflect? Nearly half a millennium after Ibn Qutayba and al-Jāḥiẓ, how did al-Nuwayrī see himself in relation to the sources he anthologized and commented upon? It is to these questions and others that I will turn next.

## CHAPTER 4

### COSMOGRAPHY, ANTHOLOGY, CHRONICLE, COMMONPLACE BOOK:

#### THE *NIHĀYA*'S SOURCES & COMPOSITIONAL MODELS

Al-Nuwayrī begins the *Nihāya* with a preface that offers a glimpse into his motivations for embarking upon his encyclopaedic project. While there are many relevant statements scattered throughout the work—which has five prefaces, one for each of its five books—the first preface is the most revealing. In the manner of many medieval Arabic compilatory texts, it contains a survey of contents and a brief discussion of the circumstances that led al-Nuwayrī to compose it:

Of the most worthy things to adorn pages and notebooks, and to be uttered by the tongues of pens from the mouths of inkstands, and which has been proclaimed by those of sound mind, and from which the high-born have claimed descent, and which the scribe has made the means by which he achieves his ends, and the path whose follower is never lost, is the art of *adab*,<sup>276</sup> in the valley of which the scribe encamps only to see his deserts bloom, and whose watering places he visits and deems sweet, and into whose courtyard he descends only to find its size yet more vast, and whose quandaries he ponders only to have their explanations made clear.

I was one of those who, [though I traveled] its deserts, did not stop to join its gathering.<sup>277</sup> I made the craft of secretaryship the branch in whose shade I reposed, and the field in which were combined for me both old and new

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<sup>276</sup> I translate al-Nuwayrī's "*fann al-adab*" here as "the art of *adab*," rather than "the branch of *adab*." This is inconsistent with my rendering of the work's title, however it seems more mellifluous a translation in this context. By "art," I have in mind the acceptance of a branch of knowledge (as in "the art of war"), rather than art as creative expression. Both of these ideas are encompassed by the modern Arabic word "*fann*," but the classical term did not denote the latter. I have chosen to translate the term *adab* in the title of the *Nihāya* as "erudition" only for the sake of preserving the rhyme between *arab* and *adab* ("The Ultimate Ambition in the Branches of Erudition"). In most other instances, I have chosen not to translate it.

<sup>277</sup> I am grateful to Adam Talib for puzzling over the meaning of this cryptic and important phrase with me: *wa-kuntu mimman 'adala fī mabādīhi 'an al-ilmām bi-nādihi*.

possessions. I knew its manifest aspects and discovered its hidden ones. I opened the account-books and determined on their basis the increase of profits, and in this respect I was [as brilliant] as a fire on a hilltop. I had laws repealed, and I calibrated scales [...] <sup>278</sup> and I mastered the materials of this craft, and traded in it with the most valuable merchandise.

Then I put it behind me, and decided to leave it privately if not publicly, and I asked God to allow me to dispense with it, and I implored Him for that which He is more able to provide than it. I sought out the craft of humanistic disciplines (*ṣināʿat al-ādāb*) and I became devoted to it, and enlisted in the path of its masters. <sup>279</sup> But I saw that my objective would not be achieved by gleaning it from the mouths of the cultivated, nor would my access to it become clear so long as I applied my efforts foolishly.

So, I mounted the stallion of reading (*muṭālaʿa*) and galloped in the field of consultation (*murājaʿa*). When the steed became obedient to me and its water sources became clear, I chose to abstract from [my reading] a book that would keep me company, that I could consult, and that I would rely upon when faced with certain tasks. I called upon God most High, and produced five books (*funūn*) arranged harmoniously and clearly, each one divided into five sections (*aqsām*). <sup>280</sup>

In contrast to the prefaces of al-ʿUmarī’s *Masālik al-abṣār* and al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, al-Nuwayrī’s testimony gives the impression that he wrote the *Nihāya* not for an audience of fellow scribes, but primarily for himself. The world of secretaryship is credited as an inspiration only insofar as it drove al-Nuwayrī to reject its dusty ledgers to pursue a different calling, the mastery of *adab*. The absence of a dedication to a patron—not even a recognition of the Mamluk sultan—heightens the solitary mood of the preface. In its original design, the work is portrayed as a personal reference, a tool

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<sup>278</sup> Al-Nuwayrī continues in this vein for a whole paragraph of rhymed prose, listing various kinds of administrative duties in which he excelled, mostly related to accounting.

<sup>279</sup> The term ‘humanism’ is just as problematic as “encyclopaedia,” in the context of Arabic-Islamic studies, and yet is no less convenient or easily circumventable. On these matters, see Alexander Key, “The Applicability of the Term “Humanism” to Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,” *Studia Islamica* 100/101 (2005): 71-112.

<sup>280</sup> *Nihāya*, 1:2-3.

for self-edification, a store-house for the author's treasured clippings, excerpts, and paraphrases.

In certain ways, these candid offerings help us understand the mere fact of the *Nihāya*, which does not rest easy within any attested generic traditions. Consider for a moment the striking incongruity of this enormous work in the life of a man who never wrote another book: no anthologies of poetry, epistles, or epigrams; no commentaries on canonical works; no scribal treatises or manuals; in short, no serious engagement in the quintessential scholarly activities of his day. Unlike many other Mamluk scholars with encyclopaedic interests (to whom the biographical literature attributes a staggering number of works, large and small) al-Nuwayrī is a single book author. True, the *Nihāya* alone dwarfs the life's work of many of al-Nuwayrī's contemporaries, but this is part of what is so remarkable about it. That an individual whose career had been devoted to tallying taxes and calibrating weights and measures should produce a literary-historical *summa* during his retirement is an odd fact to contemplate. It recalls our earlier discussion about the place of literary pursuits in the scribal context: for al-Nuwayrī, *kitāba* and *adab* are two entirely separate domains.<sup>281</sup> Success in the former did not go hand-in-hand with a mastery of the latter. One could rise in the ranks as an elite administrator without being a walking encyclopaedia in the tradition of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, or Ibn al-Athīr, or al-Qalqashandī.

Having decided to launch this project of self-edification, it is noteworthy that both its goal and the means to achieve it are conceived in terms of written rather than oral mediums. Al-Nuwayrī recognizes that he cannot simply acquire mastery by

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<sup>281</sup> See the section titled "A Scribal Milieu: al-Nuwayrī at the *Diwān al-khāṣṣ*," in Chapter 2.

attending literary soirées to hear poets declaiming panegyrics before their patrons. The *adab* collections of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries are now primary sources, along with hundreds of other canonical texts. Navigating this literary heritage could only be done through reading and consultation (*muṭālaʿa wa-murājaʿa*), and the end product of this reading and consultation was, unsurprisingly, yet another book. Al-Nuwayrī's attitude towards his sources is summed up in the second half of the preface, which follows the table of contents (see Appendix A):

When [this book's] chapters were completed, and its whole and parts were united, I named it *The Ultimate Ambition in the Branches of Erudition*.

Through it, I achieved my goal and purpose, securing the essential and banishing the incidental, adorning it with the necklace of my own sayings, and the pearls of my predecessors. My own words in it are like the night-cloud leading the rain-clouds, or the patrol followed by the squadron. They are only a summary of its books, and a veil for its eyes.

I only included that which would please the senses, and had I known of any error in it, I would have clenched my fingers and turned away. But I have followed the traces of those excellent ones before me, and pursued their way, and connected my rope to theirs. So if there should be any complaint, the dishonor is upon them and not me. I have learned that he who composes a book becomes a target, deafening some ears even as he pleases others.<sup>282</sup>

The semantics of the work's title bear some important differences to earlier classical *adab* collections. As Stephanie Thomas has observed, works like Ibn Qutayba's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* ('The Choicest of Reports') and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* ('The Unique Necklace'), place an emphasis on "the superlative quality of the contents, their preciousness, their extreme value (to the reader and to culture at large), and the rarity and novelty of their being collected in a single (though not single-volume) work." She contrasts this with the orientation of a later work, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *Muḥāḍarāt al-*

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<sup>282</sup> *Nihāya*, 1: 26-27.

*udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā' wa-'l-bulaghā'* ('Apt Quotables of the Literati and Conversations of Poets and Eloquent Men') which adopts a more pragmatic self-presentation, describing its contents as "the speech items of specific social groups."<sup>283</sup> The first half of the *Nihāya*'s rhyming title (*Nihāyat al-arab*, 'The Ultimate Ambition') may recall the self-glorifying strains of Ibn Qutayba and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's books, but its claim of exquisiteness and uniqueness is essentially a place-holder meant to rhyme with the descriptive second half of the title (*funūn al-adab*, 'the Branches of Erudition'). Here the emphasis is not on the value or function of the work's contents, but on the unambiguous identification of the genre it claims to belong to (*adab*), and its multi-dimensional character.<sup>284</sup> In al-Nuwayrī's treatment, *adab* transgresses the boundaries of its expansive earlier acceptations and becomes an ever more splended ideal, encompassing genres and discourses once deemed beyond its purview.

Who were the masters (*arbāb*) of *adab* that al-Nuwayrī wanted to emulate? Beyond the distant exemplars of the tradition, one suspects that he had some of the famous litterateurs of his own age in mind, figures who led the imperial chanceries in Cairo and Damascus. Examples include Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī (whose book *Ḥusn al-tawassul ilā šinā'at al-tarassul* al-Nuwayrī incorporated into his chapter on secretaryship) and the Ibn Faḍl Allāh brothers—Sharaf al-Dīn (d. 717/1317) and Muḥyī al-Dīn (d. 738/1337)—the latter of whom was the father of Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī, author of the encyclopaedic *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. The Banū Faḍl Allāh was

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<sup>283</sup> Thomas, "The Concept of Muḥāḍara," 214.

<sup>284</sup> See the epistle by 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Yamānī about the literary debate between the candle and candelabrum (*Nihāya* 1:124-29 [DKI: 116-21]), in which the author discusses the branches of the arts (*funūn al-ādāb*), and their smaller branches (*shu'ūb*). This gives us some sense of how al-Nuwayrī used the term *funūn*.

a cultivated scribal family, a fixture of Mamluk politics during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and well-known for their patronage of poets and litterateurs.<sup>285</sup> Among the beneficiaries of their largesse was Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī (d. 768/1366), one of the greatest poets of the Mamluk period and a contemporary of al-Nuwayrī's. While he is not quoted in the *Nihāya* and may not have emerged as a celebrity poet by the time al-Nuwayrī began writing, the two men circulated in the same networks of chancery officials and religious scholars interested in *adab*. There are important differences between them, however, and comparing their professional trajectories helps us to appreciate the model to which al-Nuwayrī may have aspired. Thomas Bauer writes of Ibn Nubāta:

Thirty years was the appropriate age to venture onto the public stage as an *adīb*. Ibn Nubātah prepared for this step carefully. He collected material to be included in an anthology that, at the same time, was a manifesto of the importance of the *adīb* for contemporary scholarly society. In this book, the *Maṭla' al-fawā'id*, Ibn Nubātah presented himself both as a scholarly expert on language and *adab*, as well as a legitimate heir to the grand tradition of Arabic poetry and prose. But was Cairo the right place to publish this book? The master of prose style, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, was dead, and his successor as master *munshi*, Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd, directed the chancellery in Damascus. In Cairo, popular poetry flourished, but if Ibn Nubātah wanted to realize his project of a literature of sophistication and refinement, he had to address all those people who happened to live in Damascus or in other places in Syria at that time... I do not believe that the reason for Ibn Nubātah's departure from Cairo was economic failure as a panegyrist (for which there is no evidence), but rather his aspiration to join the ranks of the greatest *udabā'* of the time. He could find them in the

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<sup>285</sup> Al-Nuwayrī does not indicate that he knew any of these figures personally, but mentions their appointments and comings and goings on several occasions in the historical book of the *Nihāya*. He devotes an obituary to Sharaf al-Dīn b. Faḍl Allāh, who was head of the chancery (*kātib al-sirr*) in both Cairo and Damascus (see *Nihāya*, 32:277, DKI: 32:213). His younger brother Badr al-Dīn was a chancery official in Damascus, and his other brother, Muḥyī al-Dīn, held several high-ranking positions. Al-Nuwayrī also mentions the young Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, who would eventually write the *Masālik al-abṣār*, in his description of Muḥyī al-Dīn's arrival in Cairo in 729/1329, when he was appointed confidential secretary (see *ibid.*, 33:278, DKI: 33:211). See also "Faḍl Allāh," *EI2*.



chancelleries of Damascus and Aleppo, in their madrasahs and the Umayyad mosque, or in al-Mu'ayyad's palace in Ḥamāh.<sup>286</sup>

At the equivalent stage in his own life, al-Nuwayrī was still working in administration and had recently returned from Syria, where he spent some of the most fruitful and rewarding years of his career.<sup>287</sup> Like Ibn Nubāta, he was in thrall to the sophistication of the Syrian *udabā'*, but unlike the great poet, al-Nuwayrī was not a literary prodigy. By his own admission, he had spent most of his life as a kind of dabbler, a person who appreciated *adab* but had not “stopped to join its gathering,” devoting himself instead to the craft of financial secretaryship. While Ibn Nubāta could stage his literary “coming out party” at age thirty, al-Nuwayrī's own journey into the sprawling landscape of *adab* was only just beginning. In this way, he bears a greater resemblance to someone like Ibn Nubāta's son, whom Thomas Bauer describes as “a mediocre *adīb*, who earned his living as a copyist,” and did not live up to the expectations of his father. When al-Nuwayrī left administration, he could not fall back on any extraordinary literary talents to support himself while writing the *Nihāya*. Like Ibn Nubāta's son, he made ends meet by working as a copyist. In this sense, he was part of a large subset of the *'ulamā'* for whom scholarly and literary pursuits were “more an avocation than a career.”<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Bauer, “Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī,” 15-16.

<sup>287</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 42.

<sup>288</sup> Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 403-4. In this regard, al-Nuwayrī's work may be compared in certain ways to a text such as Jean Bodin's (d. 1596) *Theatrum Universae Naturae* and other works of Renaissance natural philosophy, “works designed to instruct and delight nonspecialists, from university students and other “studious persons” to more general readers, for example, those identified as “the curious.”” As Ann Blair notes, the late Renaissance “fostered an explosion of works of general natural philosophy. Authors in many different professions and circumstances

To call al-Nuwayrī a mediocre *adīb* is something of a heresy, and perhaps a gratuitous provocation. I do not propose this assessment, however, by way of disparagement, much less as an indictment of the period as one of intellectual proceduralism, scholasticism, and decadence. What I mean is simply that his particular talent lay not in composing poetry and literary prose (as was the case for Ibn Nubāta, Ṣaḥī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī, Ibn Dāniyāl, and other luminaries of Mamluk literature) but rather in synthesizing and arranging enormous quantities of information into an integrated and well-fashioned compilation. To insist on al-Nuwayrī's status as a great *adīb* with impeccable poetic discernment (as some of his modern readers have done) is to disregard his methods of compilation which often depended, as we will see, on the efforts of earlier anthologists. It is also to misread al-Nuwayrī's frank testimony in the preface to the *Nihāya*, in which he describes the work as the vehicle of his own self-education in *adab* after his disenchantment with the world of administration (what we might describe today as a mid-career shift, perhaps the result from a work-induced mid-life crisis).

To reiterate a point made earlier, the fact of al-Nuwayrī's status as a novice in *adab* is partly what makes his work so interesting, and sheds light on the ways that individuals like him—amateur *adībs* compared to giants like Ibn Nubāta, but accomplished compilers, anthologists, and historians in their own right—participated in the literary culture of their day.

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extolled the virtues of the study of nature, as morally uplifting, useful, and pleasantly varied. The fluidity of the social and cultural position of the field allowed for the publication of many different kinds of works, including some identifiable genres (new and not so new) and a number of individual books which, like Bodin's *Theatrum*, combined the elements of different kinds without fitting any in particular." (Blair, *Theater of Nature*, 14.)

## Compositional Models & Sources

Like most encyclopaedic texts, the *Nihāya* is a collection of older authoritative material.<sup>289</sup> With the exception of the large sub-chapter on financial administration in §2.5.14, hundreds of short authorial interventions, and extensive swaths of first-hand historiographical narrative in the final volumes of the work, the *Nihāya* depends on a range of sources in multiple disciplines composed over many centuries. It is difficult to compile an accurate list of these sources because al-Nuwayrī does not list them consistently. His modes of attribution range from complete citation (with the author's full name and the title of the book), to partial citation, to no citation at all.<sup>290</sup> And even in cases where a full or partial citation is given, one cannot generally assume that al-Nuwayrī consulted this source directly, as he may be reproducing a citation that is present in a larger excerpt from a different text.<sup>291</sup> Collating and cross-referencing these sources against each other is painstaking work, which is why even some of the

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<sup>289</sup> See Záhora, “The Tropolological Universe” on the use of earlier sources in medieval European encyclopaedic works: “Adaptation of authorities may range from wholesale borrowing and altering of a master-text, as in the case of the reworking of Isidore's *De naturis rerum*, to highly sophisticated compositions in which verbatim citation is subjected to idiosyncratic structural models. But even the most advanced medieval encyclopedias, such as Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum maius* (completed around 1244), are in fact highly derivative works whose reputed *auctoritates* represent layers upon layers of other encyclopedias, compilations, lists, commentaries, and school discussions. Add to that the expansive range of many encyclopedias, as well as the medieval custom of referring only to the most respectable authorities and silently embedding direct sources and more recent works in one's own text—and one soon realizes that the search for sources of medieval encyclopedias can easily become rather elusive, and exhausting rather than exhaustive.” (52)

<sup>290</sup> Al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 118–53.

<sup>291</sup> For example, in *Nihāya* §1.1.4.18 (on the celestial temples), al-Nuwayrī refers to al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab* in a quote that is part of a larger passage taken from al-Waṭwāt's *Mabāḥij al-fikar*, the primary source for Book I. A few pages earlier, al-Nuwayrī quotes al-Shahrastānī's heresiographical work, *Kitāb al-milal wa-'l-niḥal*, but the passage does not appear in the *Mabāḥij*. See *Nihāya* 1:57 (DKI 1:50–51), 1:61–62 (DKI 1:54–56).

*Nihāya*'s closest readers have been confounded in their attempts to reconstruct al-Nuwayrī's complete library of sources.<sup>292</sup>

The *Nihāya*'s broad compositional model is traceable to the work of another Mamluk compiler named Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā b. 'Alī al-Anṣārī al-Kutubī al-Waṭwāt (632/1235 -718/1318), who was an Egyptian manuscript copyist and contemporary of al-Nuwayrī's known for his wide-ranging knowledge of books. His biographers describe him as a worthy litterateur who deployed his erudition and aesthetic taste in the production of literary compilations (*majāmi' adabiyya*),<sup>293</sup> including a two-volume anthology entitled *Ghurar al-khaṣā'is al-wāḍiḥa wa-'urar al-naqā'is al-fāḍiḥa*,<sup>294</sup> and the four-volume encyclopaedic compendium, *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar* (hereafter, *Mabāhij*).<sup>295</sup>

While not much is known about him, what little information exists suggests that al-Waṭwāt was a figure whose network of acquaintances, friends, and enemies

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<sup>292</sup> See Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 159-63; al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 181-88.

<sup>293</sup> Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-'aṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, 2:397-400; idem, *al-Wāfi bi-'l-wafayāt*, 2:16-17; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mī'a 'l-thāmina*, 3:365-66. His epithet, al-Waṭwāt (the Bat), was likely due to his poor vision, a trait remarked upon by the poet Ibn Dāniyāl in a couplet quoted by al-Ṣafadī (see idem, *A'yān*, 2:398).

<sup>294</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāt, *Ghurar al-khaṣā'is al-wāḍiḥa wa-'urar al-naqā'is al-fāḍiḥa*, ed. Nāṣir Muḥammadī Muḥammad Jād (al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Yaqīn, 2010).

<sup>295</sup> There is no critical edition of the complete *Mabāhij*. A facsimile of an early manuscript copy was published by Fuat Sezgin in 1988: see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāt, *Manāhij al-fikar wa-mabāhij al-'ibar*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1990). The third and fourth books on animals and plants have been published separately: on animals, see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāt, *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar*, ed. 'Abd al-Razzāq Aḥmad al-Ḥarbī (Beirut: al-Dār al-'Arabiyya lil-Mawsū'āt); on plants, see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwāt, *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar*, ed. Nāṣir Husayn Aḥmad (Baghdad: al-Majma' al-'Ilmī, 2008). An edition of the sections dealing with the geography of Egypt has also been published: see 'Abd al-'Āl 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Shāmī, *Min Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar lil-Waṭwāt: ṣafahāt min juḡhrāfiyyat Miṣr* (Kuwait: al-Majlis al-waṭanī lil-thaqāfa wa-'l-funūn wa-'l-ādāb, 1981), 7-15.

comprised not only other men of letters, but also officials within the imperial bureaucracy and prominent members of the religious establishment.<sup>296</sup> Despite his best efforts, he was unable to secure a position within the state yet still managed to acquire a degree of prominence within learned circles. On one occasion, when his attempts were rebuffed to parlay his acquaintance with a chief judge into an appointment as his assistant, al-Waṭwāṭ sought the intercession of several other judges and prominent figures, who wrote epistles on his behalf. Al-Waṭwāṭ collected these epistles into a work entitled ‘*Ayn al-futuwwa wa-mir’āt al-muruwwa* and invited other well-known individuals to contribute laudatory blurbs to it. The collection failed to persuade al-Waṭwāṭ’s prospective employer of his industriousness, but it interested al-Ṣafadī enough to include it in his commonplace book, *al-Tadhkira al-Ṣafadiyya*.<sup>297</sup>

The fact of al-Nuwayrī’s debt to al-Waṭwāṭ’s *Mabāhij* has been noted by scholars, but the precise nature of this debt has not been delineated. The *Mabāhij* is composed of four principal books (called *funūn*, as in the *Nihāya*), on the following subjects: (i) the heavens; (ii) the earth; (iii) animals; and (iv) plants. In an early study of al-Waṭwāṭ’s text, Jirjis al-Ḥalabī pointed out the formal similarities between the *Mabāhij* and the

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<sup>296</sup> For an unsatisfactory recent study of al-Waṭwāṭ’s compositional methods (which plagiarizes certain sections from al-Shāmī’s analysis of al-Waṭwāṭ’s text), see Ilhām Aḥmad al-Karakī, *Manhajīyyat al-Waṭwāṭ al-kutubī fī mawsū’atihi Mabāhij al-fīkar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar* (Amman: Dār Ward al-Urduniyya, 2009). See also Jirjis ibn Fransīs Manash al-Mārūnī al-Ḥalabī, “al-Manāhij fī waṣf al-mabāhij,” *al-Mashriq* 10 (1907): 721-29, 774-86, reprinted in *Islamic Geography* 205 (1994): 1-22; Kāmil al-Ghazzi, “*Kitāb Nuzhat al-‘uyūn fī arba’a funūn*,” *Majallat al-Majma’ al-‘ilmī al-‘Arabī* 9 (1929): 681-87, reprinted in *Islamic Geography* 205 (1994): 24-30.

<sup>297</sup> The chief judge in question was Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn al-Khuwayyī (d. 693/1294), on whom see al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 2:137-39. Apparently, al-Waṭwāṭ also ran afoul of another important judge, the well-known historian and chancery official Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1292). According to al-Ṣafadī, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir had contributed two letters to al-Waṭwāṭ’s *Ayn al-futuwwa*—one in favor of al-Waṭwāṭ and one against him—but he apparently disliked al-Waṭwāṭ so much that he went out of his way to disparage him in a letter of investiture (*taqlīd*) that he wrote for one Ibn Ghurāb. See al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān* 2:398-99.

*Nihāya*,<sup>298</sup> and the Russian orientalist Ignatiĭ Krachkovskiĭ later suggested that al-Waṭwāṭ's text had provided the basic paradigm for a range of Mamluk encyclopaedic works, the *Nihāya* betraying the most obvious sign of influence.<sup>299</sup> Krachkovskiĭ further showed that al-Nuwayrī had relied on the *Mabāhij* extensively for content in his botanical section, and that the order of the *Nihāya*'s chapters and sections indicated that the *Mabāhij* was in fact al-Nuwayrī's principal structural inspiration.<sup>300</sup> (See table below.)

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<sup>298</sup> Al-Ḥalabī, "al-Manāhij fī waṣf al-Mabāhij," 780.

<sup>299</sup> I. Krachkovskiĭ, *Ta'rikh al-adab al-jughrāfi al-'arabi* (Cairo: Lajnat al-ta'lif wa-'l-tarjama wa-'l-nashr, 1963-65), 406-410.

<sup>300</sup> See also Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 103; al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 149, 170, 177. Chapoutot-Remadi writes in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*: "Al-Nuwayrī was greatly inspired by the geographical encyclopaedia of his predecessor, al-Waṭwāṭ (d. 718/1318 [q.v.]) entitled *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-'ibar*... for the subdivision into *fanns* and even for the content. The four *fanns* of al-Waṭwāṭ recur in the work of al-Nuwayrī, who added history to form a fifth section. Furthermore, he mentions him by name, as he does with the majority of his sources. In the books devoted to natural history, fauna and flora, he makes a synthesis between three types of pre-occupation, naturalist, medical and literary. He thus describes the animal or the plant, mentions its medical and other attributes, the legends concerning his subject and the poems of which it has been the object. Science and *adab* are thus united."

**Table 12: The Contents of al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ibar*<sup>301</sup>**

§	Chapter Title	v./p.	# of pp.
1.0	<b>The First Book, on the Heavens (<i>fī dhikr al-samā'</i>)</b>	1:5	215
1.1	On the creation ( <i>khalq</i> ) of the heavens and their structure ( <i>hay'a</i> )	1:7	17
1.2	On the planets ( <i>al-kawākib al-mutaḥayyira</i> )	1:24	38
1.3	On the fixed stars ( <i>al-kawākib al-thābita</i> ) and their forms ( <i>ṣuwar</i> )	1:62	17
1.4	On the stations of the moon and their conjoined asterisms ( <i>anwā'</i> )	1:79	30
1.5	On the meteorological phenomenon and the reasons for their occurrence	1:109	38
1.6	On the nights and days	1:147	26
1.7	On the months and years	1:173	11
1.8	On the seasons and their times ( <i>azminatihā</i> )	1:184	21
1.9	On the holidays of different peoples and their feasts ( <i>mawāsimihā</i> )	1:205	14
2.0	<b>The Second Book, on the Earth (<i>fī dhikr al-arḍ</i>)</b>	1:220	219
2.1	On the creation of the earth ( <i>fī mabda' khalq al-arḍ</i> ) and its configuration ( <i>hay'atihā</i> )	1:220	19
2.2	On the mountains and minerals ( <i>ma'ādin</i> )	1:239	24
2.3	On the seas and islands	1:263	26
2.4	On the springs and rivers	1:289	19
2.5	On the genealogies of those in the inhabited parts of the Earth ( <i>al-ma'mūr</i> )	1:308	28
2.6	On the regions which the Muslims explored ( <i>jāsa</i> )	1:336	49
2.7	On the qualities ( <i>khaṣā'iṣ</i> ) of different lands ( <i>bilād</i> ) and the natures ( <i>ṭabā'i'</i> ) of their inhabitants	1:385	17
2.8	On old buildings and ruins ( <i>al-mabānī al-qadīma wa-l-āthār</i> )	1:402	18
2.9	On descriptions of fortresses and dwellings ( <i>ma'āqil wa-manāzil</i> )	1:420	18

<sup>301</sup> The page and volume numbers in this table refer to the facsimile edition of the *Mabāhij* published by Fuat Sezgin.

Table 12 (cont.): The Contents of al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāḥij al-fikar wa-manāḥij al-ʿibar*

§	Chapter Title	v./p.	# of pp.
3.0	<b>The Third Book, on Animals (<i>fī dhikr al-ḥayawān</i>)</b>	2:3	258
3.1	On the qualities ( <i>khaṣāʾiṣ</i> ) of the human being <sup>302</sup>	2:4	31
3.2	On the nature of those possessing tooth and claw	2:35	42
3.3	On the nature of the wild animal ( <i>al-ḥayawān al-mutawāḥḥish</i> )	2:77	24
3.4	On the nature of domestic animals ( <i>al-ḥayawān al-ahli</i> )	2:101	30
3.5	On the nature of insects ( <i>ḥasharāt</i> ) and vermin ( <i>hawāmm</i> )	2:131	25
3.6	On the nature of birds of prey and scavenger birds ( <i>fī ṭabāʾiʿ ṣibāʿ al-ṭayr wa-kilābihā</i> )	2:156	28
3.7	On the nature of common birds ( <i>bughāth al-ṭayr</i> )	2:184	40
3.8	On the nature of nocturnal birds ( <i>ṭayr al-layl</i> ) and winged insects ( <i>hamaj</i> )	2:224	17
3.9	On the nature of the animals of the sea and amphibious ones	2:241	21
4.0	<b>The Fourth Book, on Plants (<i>fī dhikr al-nabāt</i>)</b>	2:264	220
4.1	On the creation of plants ( <i>fī kayfiyyat kawn al-nabāt wa-kammiyyatihi</i> )	2:264	12
4.2	On the soil that is suitable to plants	2:276	17
4.3	On the farming ( <i>filāḥa</i> ) of pulses and legumes ( <i>al-ḥubūb wa-l-qaṭānī</i> )	2:293	15
4.4	On the farming of different types of greens ( <i>buqūl</i> )	2:308	15
4.5	On the farming of plants whose fruit has a peel	2:323	35
4.6	On the farming of plants with [fruit that have] stones	2:358	26
4.7	On the farming of plants whose fruit have neither peel nor stone	2:384	35
4.8	On the farming of different types aromatic plants ( <i>rayāḥīn</i> )	2:419	46
4.9	On the trees productive of mannas and gum resins	2:465	19

<sup>302</sup> This chapter has another title in the manuscript relied upon by al-Karakī: “On the primacy of the human being over all other animals” (*fī bayān sharaf al-insān ʿalā sār al-makhlūqāt*). See eadem, *Manhajīyyat al-Waṭwāṭ*, 114.



When we examine the *Nihāya* and the *Mabāhij* side by side, we find that the inspiration was not limited to structure, nor was the material that al-Nuwayrī took from the *Mabāhij* limited to the book on plants. Book I of the *Nihāya* is deeply indebted to al-Waṭwāt's first two *funūn*, in form and content. It largely follows the same chapter and sub-chapter sequence as the *Mabāhij* and reproduces much of its material (just as the *Mabāhij* relies extensively on the works of al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Mas'ūdī, Ibn Waḥshiyya, Ibn Abī 'l-Ash'ath, and other figures). Al-Nuwayrī does not attempt to conceal his dependence on al-Waṭwāt, nor does he mention his source in every instance, which is perhaps why Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn and others have incorrectly assumed that al-Nuwayrī's sources for these three books included a wider array of texts than was the case.<sup>303</sup>

In fact, al-Nuwayrī relied principally on a single text for these volumes, faithfully preserving many of al-Waṭwāt's internal citations to earlier works. There are additions, deletions, and modifications of the *Mabāhij*'s materials—which reveal something about al-Nuwayrī's own interests, tastes, and prejudices, as I discuss below—but there is no mistaking the fact that the *Nihāya* essentially swallowed the *Mabāhij* whole, adjusted it in certain ways, and re-produced it in the form of its own first, third,

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<sup>303</sup> See, for example, M. Esperonnier, "Al-Nuwayrī: Les fêtes islamiques, persanes, chrétiennes et juives," *Arabica* 32.1 (March 1985): 80-101, who methodically traces al-Nuwayrī's sources in *Nihāya* §1.3.4 but is not aware that most of these sources were copied wholesale from the *Mabāhij*. Amīna Jamāl al-Dīn lists al-Nuwayrī's sources in Books I, III, and IV without realizing that most of them had come to the *Nihāya* by way of the *Mabāhij*; see eadem, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 137-53. She also presents an analysis of the "dīwān" of the *Nihāya*, arguing that al-Nuwayrī's eclectic selections reflect his vast readings of poetry anthologies. Here again, she did not recognize that much of the poetry in these particular books also came from the *Mabāhij*. In general, al-Nadwī is more cognizant of the extent of al-Nuwayrī's debt to al-Waṭwāt, but he too assumes that Book IV drew on the *Mabāhij* only for its poetry; see eadem, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 177.

and fourth *funūn*. Most importantly for our purposes, we see that the *Mabāhij* provided the template for the *Nihāya*'s hypotactic architecture, which al-Nuwayrī expanded considerably to include the two additional *funūn* that together would make up over 90% of the new work (see Table 9 and Figure 12 in Chapter 3). The following table compares the internal contents of Book I of the *Nihāya* against Books I and II of al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāhij*.

**Table 13: Comparison between *Nihāya* §1.0 and *Mabāhij* §1.0-§2.0**

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Source Notes</i>
§1.1.1	<b><i>On the creation of the heavens</i></b> – Corresponds to <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.1.1
§1.1.2	<b><i>On the configuration of the heavens</i></b> – Some changes in structure: <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.1.2 is on the subject of angels and al-Waṭwāt returns to the present subject in <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.1.4, with some differences in the reports presented. Missing is al-Nuwayrī's disparaging comment on the sayings of the astrologers ( <i>al-munajjimūn</i> ), along with the material on proverbs, and descriptive poetry. Al-Nuwayrī's final sub-chapter containing poetry on the celestial spheres ( <i>al-aflāk</i> ) appears in <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.1.8.
§1.1.3	<b><i>On the angels</i></b> – The <i>Mabāhij</i> contains much more material on this subject than the <i>Nihāya</i> , split across two <i>fuṣūl</i> (§1.1.2 and §1.1.3). Al-Nuwayrī does not reproduce al-Waṭwāt's discussion of the difference between angels and <i>jinn</i> . He also does not copy any of the material in the following sub-chapters of the <i>Mabāhij</i> : §1.1.4 (on what is between heaven and earth, and the description of God's throne); §1.1.5 (on the immensity of the throne); §1.1.6 (on what has been said about the celestial spheres); §1.1.7 (on the spheres [ <i>ukar</i> ] and whether they are a single sphere); §1.1.8 (on disagreements among the Ancients about what is beyond the nine spheres); §1.1.9 (on the visible color [ <i>al-lawn al-mar'īy</i> ] of the heavens).
§1.1.4	<b><i>On the seven planets</i></b> – This large chapter in the <i>Nihāya</i> corresponds closely to <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.2, in terms of structure, sub-chapters, etc.
§1.1.4.1	<b><i>On the seven planets</i></b> – This comes entirely from the <i>Mabāhij</i> , with the exception of the final paragraph where al-Nuwayrī again dismisses the sayings of the astrologers; by contrast, al-Waṭwāt expressly addresses them (see <i>Mabāhij</i> 1:26, line 21).
§1.1.4.2	<b><i>On what has been said about the sun</i></b> – In al-Waṭwāt's version of this chapter (§1.2.1), he compares transmitted material ( <i>al-qawl al-naqlī</i> ) about the sun to rational material ( <i>al-qawl al-'aqlī</i> ); see <i>Mabāhij</i> 1:30. Al-Nuwayrī transmits the former (without labeling it as <i>al-qawl al-naqlī</i> ) but not the latter. <sup>304</sup>
§1.1.4.3	<b><i>On proverbs containing a mention of the sun</i></b> – This sub-chapter does not appear in the <i>Mabāhij</i> . <sup>305</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Al-Waṭwāt's astronomical material on the sun is more thorough-going than the *Nihāya*'s. Al-Nuwayrī depends mainly on exegetical reports about various Qur'ān verses that mention the sun (e.g., some commentators believed that the sun was in the fifth heaven during the summer and in the seventh heaven during the winter, etc.)

<sup>305</sup> In fact, the majority of chapters containing proverbs in Books I, III, and IV do not appear in the *Mabāhij*, but are listed in the table of contents provided in al-Karakī, *Manhajīyyat al-Waṭwāt*, 103-119. It may be that the manuscript published in facsimile by Fuat Sezgin was different from the manuscripts consulted by al-Karakī.

Table 13 (cont.): Comparison between *Nihāya* §1.0 and *Mabāhij* §1.0-§2.0

Chapter	Source Notes
§1.1.4.4	<b>Literary descriptions of the sun</b> – Most of the poetry transmitted is found in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.5	<b>Things said about the sun by way of censure</b> – Contains poetry from some late poets like Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (d. 1212) and al-Tifāshī (d. 1253). Material is taken largely from the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.6	<b>On the sun's occultation</b> – Not in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.7	<b>On the sun's names</b> – Not in the <i>Mabāhij</i> ; source is al-Tha'ālibī's <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i> .
§1.1.4.8	<b>On worshippers of the sun</b> – Not in the <i>Mabāhij</i> ; al-Nuwayrī's source is al-Shahrastānī's (d. 1153) <i>Kitāb al-milal wa-'l-niḥal</i> .
§1.1.4.9	<b>On what has been said about the moon</b> -- The material in this chapter is from al-Waṭwāt with the exception of the “rational” reports ( <i>al-qawl al-'aqlī</i> ). <sup>306</sup>
§1.1.4.10	<b>The moon and its nights</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.11	<b>Names of the moon</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.12	<b>Proverbs about the moon</b> – Not in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.13	<b>Literary descriptions of the moon</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.14	<b>Things said about the moon by way of censure</b> – This chapter is a near exact copy of <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.2.8.
§1.1.4.15	<b>On worshippers of the moon</b> – Al-Nuwayrī's source is not the <i>Mabāhij</i> but al-Shahrastānī's <i>K. al-milal wa-'l-niḥal</i> (as in §1.1.4.8). The <i>Nihāya</i> skips al-Waṭwāt's significant sub-chapter on the moon's occultation.
§1.1.4.16	<b>On what has been said about the planets</b> – In the <i>Mabāhij</i> (see 1:51 line 8) but much longer there and followed by a chapter about the sayings of the astronomers about the planets that does not exist in Nuwayrī (see <i>Mabāhij</i> 1:52, line17).
§1.1.4.17	<b>On worshippers of the governing angels (al-rūḥāniyyāt)</b> – Different treatment in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.1.4.18	<b>On the celestial temples</b> – Al-Nuwayrī's citations of al-Mas'ūdī's <i>Murūj al-dhahab</i> originate in the <i>Mabāhij</i> . Other materials are not transmitted, including a large sub-chapter containing poetry on the celestial temples (see <i>Mabāhij</i> 1:59-62).
§1.1.5.1	<b>On the fixed stars</b> – Follows <i>Mabāhij</i> , but without <i>al-qawl al-'aqlī</i> material.
§1.1.5.2	<b>Proverbs mentioning the stars</b> – Not in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .

<sup>306</sup> Among the 'aqlī reports that al-Nuwayrī does not transmit are some from Aristotle and Plato, which is strange considering that he espouses great admiration for the wisdom of these Ancients; see for example *Nihāya* 1:350-53 (DKI: 1:324-27).

Table 13 (cont.): Comparison between *Nihāya* §1.0 and *Mabāhij* §1.0-§2.0

Chapter	Source Notes
§1.1.5.3	<b>Literary descriptions of the stars</b> – The <i>Nihāya</i> contains different poetry than the <i>Mabāhij</i> , which transmits verses related only to the northern constellations.
§1.2.1.1	<b>On clouds, snow, and hail</b> – In <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.5.8.
§1.2.1.2	<b>Classification of clouds and rain</b> – Source is al-Tha‘ālibī’s <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i> ; not found in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.2.1.7	
§1.2.1.8	<b>Literary descriptions of clouds and rain</b> – Similar poetry and epistles in the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.2.1.9	<b>Literary descriptions of clouds and hail</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.2.2.	<b>On shooting stars, thunder, lightning, rainbows</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> , including references to al-Zamakhsharī’s <i>Kashshāf</i> .
§1.2.3	<b>On the element of wind</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> , plus citation of al-Tha‘ālibī’s <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i> .
§1.2.4	<b>On the element of fire</b> – Partial dependence on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.3	<b>On the nights, days, months, years, seasons, and holidays</b> – This <i>qishm</i> in the <i>Nihāya</i> corresponds to <i>Mabāhij</i> §1.6-§1.9. Al-Waṭwāṭ organizes his materials according to his usual traditional/rational binary ( <i>naqlī</i> vs. <i>‘aqlī</i> ), while al-Nuwayrī transmits only the traditional material. Poetic citations are largely the same.
§1.4.1	<b>On the beginning of the creation of the Earth</b> – Corresponds to <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.1.
§1.4.2	<b>Classification of kinds of terrain</b> – Source is al-Tha‘ālibī’s <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i> .
§1.4.3	<b>On the size of the earth and its area</b> – Source is acknowledged to be the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.4.4	<b>On the seven climes</b> – Corresponds to <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.1.9, including quotes from Ptolemy. Transmitted poetry is similar, but proverbs are missing in the <i>Mabāhij</i> , which contains a significant amount of geographical information on the configuration of the earth; this material is not in the <i>Nihāya</i> , replaced instead with more philological material from the <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i> .
§1.4.5	<b>On the mountains</b> – See §1.4.4.
§1.4.6	<b>On the seas and islands</b> – Based word-for-word on the <i>Mabāhij</i> , including quotations from Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī’s (d. 1094) <i>Masālik wa-mamālik</i> ; al-Idrīsī’s (d. 1166) <i>Nuzhat al-mushtāq ilā ikhtirāq al-āfāq</i> , and Ibrāhīm b. Waṣīf Shāh’s (d. 1200) <i>Kitāb al-‘ajā’ib al-kabīr</i> .
§1.4.7	<b>On bodies of water</b> – Based on the <i>Mabāhij</i> .
§1.5.1	<b>On the qualities of different lands and the dispositions of their inhabitants</b> – Corresponds to <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.7.

Table 13 (cont.): Comparison between *Nihāya* §1.0 and *Mabāhij* §1.0-§2.0

Chapter	Source Notes
§1.5.2	<b><i>On the qualities of different cities</i></b> – The last sub-chapter (on things that different cities are known for) is in found at <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.7.4, but the vast majority of this very large chapter is not in al-Waṭwāṭ’s work. Furthermore, the <i>Mabāhij</i> ’s chapter on human geography (§2.5) is not in <i>Nihāya</i> Book I, but is drawn upon in the genealogical chapters of Book II. See below for further commentary.
§1.5.3	<b><i>On ancient buildings</i></b> – Partial dependence on <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.8.
§1.5.4	<b><i>On descriptions of strongholds and fortresses</i></b> – Partial dependence on <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.9.
§1.5.5	<b><i>On descriptions of palaces and royal homes</i></b> – Partial dependence on <i>Mabāhij</i> §2.9.2.

Even when it appears that a compiler’s method is based on stringing together large sections of text from a single source rather than many shorter quotations from several sources, his choice of what to include and omit from the primary source is revealing of his overall purpose. In the case of Book I, we see that al-Nuwayrī edited and adjusted the material he copied from al-Waṭwāṭ in subtle ways. The first thing to note is that al-Waṭwāṭ was generally more interested in scientific matters than al-Nuwayrī, whose approach is more literary and philological. Al-Waṭwāṭ organizes the authoritative material that he transmits according to a rational/traditional epistemological binary (*al-qawl al-‘aqlī* vs. *al-qawl al-naqlī*); al-Nuwayrī only transmits the traditional material and does not explain his reasons for omitting the rational view, except to say a few disparaging things about astrologers early in Book I.<sup>307</sup> What may have attracted al-Nuwayrī to al-Waṭwāṭ’s text was the clarity of its structural scheme,

<sup>307</sup> “I have steered clear of the statements of the astrologers, because they contain guile and bad intentions (*sū’ al-ṭawīyya wa-qubḥ al-i’tiqād*); some of them believe that the stars have effects [on events]...” See *Nihāya*, 1:40 (DKI 1:33).

whereby cosmological and geographical topics are treated from both literary and non-literary perspectives. To compensate for the material he discards, al-Nuwayrī adds more discussion of Qur’ānic verses, Prophetic traditions, sayings by venerated figures in Islamic history, the odd Hellenistic aphorism, and a significant amount of philological and literary material.

Another difference between the two texts lies in their treatment of geography. Al-Waṭwāṭ’s chapters contain information about cities, oceans, and continents all over the known world while the *Nihāya* focuses mainly on what we might call devotional geography: descriptions of sacred monuments and cities within the Islamic lands. Chapter §1.5.2 of the *Nihāya* makes up nearly one quarter of the entire first *fann* and is dominated by this material, very little of which is taken from the *Mabāhij*. The reasons for these differences in emphasis may be related to the political circumstances in which these two authors composed their works. Although they were contemporaries, al-Nuwayrī was several decades younger than al-Waṭwāṭ, decades which saw major historical developments and significant changes to Egypt’s political landscape. As Zayde Antrim has shown, geographies composed during the Mamluk period exhibit sharp differences from those composed even a few decades earlier. For example, ‘Izz al-Dīn b. Shaddād (d. 684/1285) was only twenty years younger than the Ayyūbid historian Ibn al-‘Adīm and had even served the last Ayyūbid prince before moving to Egypt and joining the Mamluk government toward the end of his life. However, Ibn Shaddād’s descriptions of Syria in his geographical work *al-A‘lāq al-khaṭīra* represent a major rupture with the discourse of place that is found among earlier authors like Ibn al-‘Adīm. He conceives of spatial parameters at the regional, rather than local, level,

combining nostalgia for a specific place with political loyalty to the sultan, and balances his discussion of topography with political history. Al-Nuwayrī's primary interest in the territories and cities that were part of the Mamluk Empire—many of which he visited in his capacity as a representative of the imperial government—along with his addition of copious amounts of political history in his fifth *fann*, may also be explained by these changing political circumstances.<sup>308</sup>

In Book III, al-Nuwayrī's primary source is again the *Mabāḥij*. Much of the poetry he transmits had been previously curated by al-Waṭwāt, and the general compositional paradigm is identical: both authors begin each chapter on an animal by relating various reports about its appearance, lineage, and general behavior from different authorities (e.g., al-Jāḥīz, Aristotle, the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, etc.) and then follow it with a sub-chapter on literary descriptions that tend toward the epigrammatic. Much of this zoological material has a *recherché*, quotable quality: dog urine removes warts and its blood is effective against the poison of Armenian arrows; female hyenas are necrophilic grave robbers; snakes love watermelon, mustard, and alcohol.<sup>309</sup> Al-Nuwayrī seems to revel in the mix of salacious and fantastical detail,<sup>310</sup> but is not opposed to

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<sup>308</sup> See Antrim, "Place and Belonging," 328-42.

<sup>309</sup> On the dog, see *Nihāya* 9:253-70 (DKI: 9:155-59); hyena, *ibid.*, 9:274-76 (DKI: 9:167-69); snake, *ibid.*, 10:133-46 (DKI: 10:79-84).

<sup>310</sup> Examples include the suggestions that lions are afraid of roosters, mice, and menstruating women (9:230-34, DKI: 9:144); a wolf's stomach can melt bones but not date stones, it sleeps with one eye open, and will split a sheep's carcass with another wolf if they cooperate in bringing it down (9:270-72, DKI: 9:165-66); mongooses kill lizards by farting in their lairs (9:276, DKI: 9:169); foxes kill hedgehogs by defecating on their quills and pouncing on them when they flip over to clean themselves (9:279-80, DKI: 9:170-72); wild ass stallions try to bite off the penises of newborn males out of jealousy (9:326, DKI: 9:199); the hide of the Saharan oryx repels arrows (9:331, DKI: 9:202); and a male monkey is so lusty that he will perform fellatio on himself if deprived of female companionship (*wa-idhā 'shtadda bihi 'l-shabaq istamnā bi-fīhi*, see 9:206). Al-Nuwayrī also relates a very strange custom among monkeys that recalls the children's song



challenging reports that seem farfetched.<sup>311</sup> In some chapters, he takes the measure of several sources, and attempts to reach a kind of synthesis between them all.<sup>312</sup> Where the *Nihāya*’s Book III departs most significantly from the *Mabāhij* is in: (1) its transmission of medical material from Ibn Sīnā’s *Qānūn*;<sup>313</sup> (2) its spinning off of al-Waṭwāṭ’s first chapter on the human being into a whole separate *fann* over twice as long as the entire *Mabāhij* (viz., the *Nihāya*’s Book II); and (3) replacing al-Waṭwāṭ’s

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about monkeys rolling over in a bed. A group of monkeys, al-Nuwayrī says, will sleep next to each other in a long line. The first one gets up in the night and walks to the end of the line, lies down, calls out, and goes to sleep. The call awakens the last monkey in line, who then does the same thing. This goes on all night, with the result that the monkeys wake up in a different location than the spot where they went to sleep (9:336-38, DKI: 9:206-7).

<sup>311</sup> For example, al-Nuwayrī disagrees with al-Jāḥiẓ on the length of a pig’s pregnancy (9:299-300, DKI: 9:182), but agrees with him on the lineage of the giraffe (9:317-18, DKI: 9:193-94). Al-Jāḥiẓ had argued against the writers of Antiquity who suggested that the giraffe was a cross-breed of many species (such as the camel, deer, cheetah, etc.). His proof against them was that the giraffe was its own legitimate species because it gave birth to like offspring. Al-Nuwayrī concurs and says that he witnessed a giraffe himself in Cairo which gave birth to a baby giraffe who remained alive at the time of his writing (see also F. Viré, “Zarāfa,” *EI2*.) In many cases, al-Nuwayrī distances himself from the alleged authenticity of the report by saying “the Bedouins claim...” (*al-‘arab taz‘amu*; see 9:339-41, DKI: 9:207-9 on the ostrich).

<sup>312</sup> See for example *Nihāya* §3.3.1.17 (9:379-83, DKI: 9:236-39), “On the non-applicability of the almsgiving obligation (*zakāt*) to horses”; al-Nuwayrī surveys the various legal opinions and *ḥadīths* on the subject, and decides what he thinks the majority opinion should be (which is associated with Mālik b. Anas, among others). See also §3.3.1.20 (10:33-38, DKI: 10:22-25) on the names of the Prophet’s horses.

<sup>313</sup> See for example the chapters on rabbits (9:334-35, DKI: 9:203) and horse illnesses (10:78, DKI: 10:48, where al-Nuwayrī provides a complicated and tested [*mujarrab*] recipe for treating *khuld*, an equine disease similar to leprosy). In chapter §3.4.1.2 (see 10:141-42, DKI: 10:84-85), al-Nuwayrī discusses Ibn Sīnā’s prescription of snake meat as beneficial in preserving youth and vigor, but cites a *ḥadīth* that contradicts this. See also §3.4.2 (10:153-54, DKI: 10:92) where he quotes Ibn Sīnā again on the liver of a large lizard (*wazaḡh*), which apparently lessens the pain of teething.

chapter on the horse (*Mabāhij* §3.4.1) with a much larger one sourced from a monograph by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dimyātī, one of al-Nuwayrī's teachers.<sup>314</sup>

Book IV of the *Nihāya*—on flowers, trees, mannas, vegetables, fruits, gum resins, etc.—exhibits further interesting divergences from the *Mabāhij*. The species treated and the method of their arrangement is very similar,<sup>315</sup> but al-Nuwayrī's primary focus is on the medical and occult properties (*khawāṣṣ*) of plants, which he draws from the same text that he relied upon in Book III, the *Kitāb al-mufrada fī 'l-adwiya* (part of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Qānūn fī 'l-ṭibb*). The *Mabāhij* does not transmit anything from Ibn Sīnā, and al-Waṭwāt is generally more interested in agriculture than medicine. His main sources in this regard are two books by Ibn Waḥshiyya (*al-Filāḥa al-nabaṭiyya* and *Asrār al-qamar*) and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Baṣṣāl's *Kitāb al-filāḥa*.<sup>316</sup> Al-Nuwayrī reproduces most of the quotations from *Asrār al-qamar*, but does not bother with the material from *al-Filāḥa al-nabaṭiyya*.<sup>317</sup> A final difference between the two works is that the delightful last *qism*

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<sup>314</sup> See 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Khalaf al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dimyātī, *Kitāb Faḍl al-khayl wa-ajnasihā wa-awṣāfiḥā wa-mahāsinihā wa-faḍā'ilihā*, ed. Maḥmūd Khalaf al-Bādī (Damascus: Dār Kinān li-'l-Ṭibā'a wa-'l-Nashr wa-'l-Tawzī', 2011).

<sup>315</sup> There are a few species that are only found in a single work. Al-Waṭwāt has chapters on lentils, cumin, lettuce, thyme, and coriander which are not given separate treatments in the *Nihāya*. Al-Nuwayrī discusses purslane, sorrel, and celery, which are not in the *Mabāhij*. Al-Waṭwāt's discussions of the almond, walnut hazelnut, palm tree, and olive are substantially larger and quite different from al-Nuwayrī's (but mostly contain the same poetry). Al-Nuwayrī discusses the rose at greater length than al-Waṭwāt, and divides his discussion of aromatics into those that can and cannot be distilled, while the *Mabāhij* groups them all under the term *rayāḥīn*.

<sup>316</sup> Ibn al-Baṣṣāl, *Libro de agricultura [por] Ibn Baṣṣāl*, eds. and trans. José Ma. Vallicrosa and Mohamed Aziman (Tetuán: Instituto Mulay el-Hasan, 1955). Al-Waṭwāt's excerpts from Ibn al-Baṣṣāl are typically related to the kinds of soil suitable for different kinds of plants.

<sup>317</sup> The differences in the first chapters of the two works are emblematic of the overall difference in approach. Both authors begin with the same quote from al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*, which explains the origin of plant life through the story of God giving Adam the seedlings for thirty different plants. Al-Nuwayrī then produces a few more reports in the same

of the *Nihāya*'s Book IV dealing with aromatics and aphrodisiacs does not appear in al-Waṭwāṭ's text at all; al-Nuwayrī copied it from a work entitled *Jayb al-ʿarūs* by one al-Tamīmī, which is no longer extant.

Where did the structural template for al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāhij* originate? Did al-Waṭwāṭ invent it himself or does his work fit into an identifiable generic tradition? While a full study of al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāhij* is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth briefly considering a few points that shed some light on the relationship between these two texts. Al-Waṭwāṭ's work was one of several cosmographical compilations produced between the mid-13<sup>th</sup> to mid-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, texts that depend upon each other in different ways and share a considerable stock of natural historical material. Whether they constitute a unitary and self-conscious generic tradition is a subject that I leave to historians of Islamic science.<sup>318</sup> The following works are relevant to our discussion (see table below).

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vein while al-Waṭwāṭ branches off to an excerpt from Ibn Waḥshiyya's *al-Filāḥa al-nabaṭiyya*, which he labels *al-qawl al-ʿaqlī* (the rational view). According to this view, the creation of plants (*ḥudūth al-nabāt*) is contingent (*jawāz*) and not pre-ordained (*wujūb*), in the sense that their nature depends on the mixing of seeds with certain kinds of soil and water. Al-Waṭwāṭ was taken with this idea, and devotes a considerable discussion to different types of soil and climates (see *Mabāhij* §4.2) that al-Nuwayrī does not put in the *Nihāya* (see 11:117, DKI: 11:79). The thirty seedlings mentioned by al-Masʿūdī include ten with husks: walnut (*jawz*), almond (*lawz*), hazelnut (*jillawz*), pistachio (*fustuq*), acorn (*ballūt*), chestnut (*shāh ballūt*), pine (*ṣanawbar*), bitter orange (*nāranj*), pomegranate (*rummān*), and poppy (*khashkhāsh*); ten with stones: olive (*zaytūn*), date (*ruṭab*), apricot (*mishmish*), peach (*khawkh*), plum (*ijjāṣ*), sorb apple (*ghubayrāʾ*), lotus-fruit (*nabiq*), jujube (*ʿunnāb*), sebesten-plum (*mukhayyat*) azarole (*zuʿrūr*); and ten with neither husk nor seed: apple (*tuffāḥ*), quince (*safarjal*), pear (*kummathrā*), grape (*ʿinab*), fig (*tīn*), citron (*utrūj*), carob (*khurnūb*), mulberry (*tūt*), cucumber (*qiththāʾ*), and melon (*biṭṭikh*).

<sup>318</sup> See Manfred Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*, (Leiden, Brill, 1972); Remke Kruk, "Hedgehogs and their 'chicks'," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 2 (1985): 205-34; eadem, "Some late mediaeval zoological texts and their sources," in *Actas del XII congreso de la U.E.A.I. (Málaga 1984)*, (Madrid: 1986): 423-29; eadem, "Elusive giraffes: Ibn Abī ʿl-Ḥawāfir's *Badāʾiʾ al-akwān* and other animal books," in Anna Contadini, ed. *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 49-64; eadem, "Zarāfa: Encounters with the Giraffe: from Paris to the Medieval Islamic World,"

**Table 14: Cosmographical compilations of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement &amp; Sources</i>
<p>‘<i>Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā’ib al-mawjūdāt</i> (‘The Wonders of Creation and the Peculiarities of Beings’), by Zakariyyā b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283)<sup>319</sup></p>	<p><b>Arrangement:</b> Two main divisions: superlunary and sublunary phenomena (‘<i>ulwiyyāt wa-suflīyyāt</i>). Section one deals with heavens, planets, and angels; section two is split into four elements (fire, air, water, earth). Animals are divided into eight chapters, and within those chapters the animals are presented in alphabetical order. Zoological sections treat both traits (ṭabā’i’) and occult properties (khawāṣṣ) of animals.</p> <p><b>Sources:</b> Various texts, especially the anonymous 13<sup>th</sup> century <i>Tuḥfat al-gharā’ib</i>.</p>
<p><i>Badā’i’ al-akwān fī manāfi’ al-ḥayawān</i> (‘Rarities of Beings, On the Medical Properties of Animals’) by Ibn Abī ‘l-Ḥawāfir (d. 701/1301)<sup>320</sup></p>	<p><b>Arrangement:</b> A zoological compendium containing one hundred animals, organized alphabetically and treating both traits (ṭabā’i’) as well as medical and occult properties (manāfi’ wa-khawāṣṣ).</p> <p><b>Sources:</b> Many authors are mentioned, with noteworthy absences such as Ibn Bakhtīshū’s <i>Manāfi’ al-ḥayawān</i>, al-Qazwīnī’s ‘<i>Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt</i>, and Ibn Sīnā.<sup>321</sup> His main sources are the same that we find in al-Waṭwāt, al-Nuwayrī, and Ibn al-Athīr: al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Mas’ūdī, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, Aristotle and other Greek naturalists (<i>aṣḥāb al-kalām fī ṭabā’i’ al-ḥayawān</i>), and Ibn Abī ‘l-Ash’ath.</p>
<p><i>Mabāḥij al-fikar wa-manāḥij al-‘ibar</i> (‘Delightful Concepts and the Paths to Precepts’) by Jamāl al-</p>	<p><b>Arrangement:</b> Four books (<i>funūn</i>), nine chapters each (<i>abwāb</i>). Animals are organized differently from both Ibn Abī ‘l-Ḥawāfir’s <i>Badā’i’</i> (which does so alphabetically) and al-Qazwīnī’s ‘<i>Ajā’ib</i> (alphabetically within eight classes). This text notably does not contain medical or occult material</p>

in Beatrice Gruendler, ed. *Classical Arabic Humanities in their Own Terms: Festschrift for Wolfhart Heinrichs on his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday Presented by His Students and Colleagues* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 568-92.

<sup>319</sup> Zakariyyā b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, ‘*Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā’ib al-mawjūdāt*, ed. Fārūq Sa’d (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1973). See also Syrinx von Hees, *Enzyklopädie als Spiegel des Weltbildes : Qazwīnīs Wunder der Schöpfung : eine Naturkunde des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 2002); eadem, “Al-Qazwīnī’s ‘*Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt*”.

<sup>320</sup> This work is unpublished; see Kruk, “Elusive giraffes.”

<sup>321</sup> The lack of medical material from Ibn Sīnā’s *Qānūn* means that al-Nuwayrī did not rely on this text for his Ibn Sīnā quotations.

**Table 14 (cont.): Cosmographical compilations of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries**

<i>Text</i>	<i>Arrangement &amp; Sources</i>
Dīn al-Waṭwāt (d. 718/1318)	( <i>manāfiʿ wa-khawāṣṣ</i> ) but adds literature (poetry and epistles).  Sources: Al-Waṭwāt's material on the qualities of animals ( <i>ṭabāʿi</i> ) probably comes from Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥawāfir's <i>Badāʿi</i> , as do his quotes from Ibn Abī 'l-Ash'ath and 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. <sup>322</sup>
<i>Tuḥfat al-ʿajāʾib wa-ṭurfat al-gharāʾib</i> ('Rarity of Wonders and Novelty of Marvels') by Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī (fl. 1318-72) <sup>323</sup>	Arrangement: Four sections ( <i>maqālāt</i> ) deal with (1) heavenly phenomena; (2) time; (3) wonders and geography; (4) natural kingdoms (minerals, animals, and plants). The structure of the text closely resembles al-Qazwīnī's <i>ʿAjāʾib</i> , and the order of the presentation of animals is identical, containing both traits ( <i>ṭabāʿi</i> ) and occult properties ( <i>khawāṣṣ</i> ). <sup>324</sup>  Sources: Al-Qazwīnī, al-Waṭwāt, and Ibn al-Durayhim, but not Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥawāfir, with whom his zoological material is almost identical. <sup>325</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Kruk, "Zarāfa," 587.

<sup>323</sup> This work is unpublished. Maria Kowalska states that it is based on al-Qazwīnī and al-Waṭwāt, and also says, "Derenbourgh might be right in his assumption that Abū 'l-Fidā' Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad b. Saʿīd b. Muḥammad 'Imād al-Dīn b. al-Athīr (1254-1299) might be possibly considered as the author of *Tuḥfat al-ʿajāʾib wa-ṭurfat al-gharāʾib*," (citing Brockelmann, *GAL* I 341; *SI* 581); see eadem, "Remarks on the Unidentified Cosmography *Tuḥfat al-gharāʾib*," *Folia Orientalia* 9 (1968), 12. On the other hand, Remke Kruk follows Ahlwardt's assessment that the work was written at some point between 1318-72; see W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften* (Berlin 1887-1899), viii, 457: "Der Verfasser erwähnt bei Besprechung der Thiere f. 222b ff. das Werk des Al-Damiri nicht. Dieses wurde im J. 773/1372 vollendet: s. bei Pm. 655. Die Annahme, dass die Abfassung seines Werkes nach 718/1318 und vor 773/1372 falle und dass er wahrscheinlich in der 2. Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts, um 730/1348 gelebt habe, wird also wohl richtig sein. Dass das Werk des Damiri das Vorliegende stark benutzt hat und der Verfasser aus ihm wörtlich abgeschrieben, ist ganz sicher: es müsste denn umgekehrt dieser aus Damiri abgeschrieben haben, was nicht anzunehmen ist."

<sup>324</sup> Kruk, "Hedgehogs," 223-24; idem, "Early zoological texts," 423-24.

<sup>325</sup> Ullmann believes that Ibn al-Athīr (who is not any of the three famous brothers known by this name) essentially copied Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥawāfir's work for the zoological portion of his compilation; see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*, 38. See also Remke Kruk, "Elusive giraffes," 53, 56.

When placed in the company of these texts, al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāya* feels strangely at home. One finds echoes of its upper-level divisions in al-Qazwīnī's *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt* along with al-Waṭwāṭ and Ibn al-Athīr's compendia, and all three of those works are hierarchically arranged like the *Nihāya* (in contrast to the paratactic arrangements of most of the *adab* works). Ibn Abī ʿl-Ḥawāfir's *Badāʾiʿ*, while formally paratactic, is alphabetically arranged and thus very easy to consult; much of its zoological material found its way into al-Nuwayrī's third *fann* by way of al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāḥij*.<sup>326</sup> Interestingly, the *Mabāḥij* is the only text among these four that transmits extensive amounts of literary material, while doing away with medical issues (*manāfiʿ*).

If al-Nuwayrī's primary structural inspiration for the *Nihāya* did not stem from the tradition of multi-thematic *adab* anthologies but rather from the cosmographical literature of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, this does not mean that the *Nihāya* was conceived as a cosmography, since al-Nuwayrī insisted that his book was a work of *adab*. However, as we have discussed, reading the *Nihāya* as an instantiation of a single medieval genre is problematic. The text is an amalgam of several genres, including the geographical compendium, zoological dictionary, pharmacopoeia, *adab* anthology, scribal manual, historical chronicle, and many other types of works (like the genealogical dictionary, the collection of poetic tropes in the tradition of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, and works related to religious sciences like *ḥadīth*, exegesis, and jurisprudence.) The table below contains an overview of sources for Books I, III, and IV, and gives a sense of the degree of generic heterogeneity encompassed therein.

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<sup>326</sup> If Remke Kruk is correct, the works of al-Waṭwāṭ and Ibn al-Athīr (which are both organized using a four-part structure) may have been influenced by al-Qazwīnī's text.

Table 15: Sources of the *Nihāya*, Books I, III, and IV<sup>327</sup>

Book I	<p><b>Primary source:</b> al-Waṭwāt, <i>Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar</i></p> <p><b>Sources not transmitted by al-Waṭwāt:</b> al-Tha‘alibī, <i>Fiqh al-lugha</i>; al-Maydānī, <i>Amthāl</i>,<sup>328</sup> al-Shahrastānī, <i>Kitāb al-milal wa l-niḥal</i>; ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Yamānī (epistle transmitted by the author, likely through personal correspondence); ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Suhaylī, <i>al-Rawḍ al-unuf fī tafsīr mā ishtamala ‘alayhi aḥādīth al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya li-Ibn Hishām</i>; ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, untitled book about Persian holidays; al-‘Imād al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kharīdat al-qaṣr wa-jarīdat al-‘aṣr</i>; al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salama, <i>Kitāb al-Fākhir</i>; Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Barr, <i>al-Ṣalāt al-Qurṭubī</i>; al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, <i>Kitāb al-shifā’</i>; al-Tha‘labī, <i>Kashf al-bayān ‘an tafsīr al-Qur’ān</i>; Ibn Zūlāq, <i>Faḍā’il Miṣr</i>; Ibn Bassām, <i>al-Dhakhīra fī maḥāsini ahl al-Jazīra</i>; al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, <i>Maṭmaḥ al-anfus</i>; idem, <i>Qalā’id al-‘iqyān</i>; Ibn Sīnā, source not given; Hippocrates (via Ibn Sīnā?)</p> <p><b>Other sources:</b><sup>329</sup> Various ḥadīth collections; al-Mas‘ūdī, <i>Murūj al-dhahab</i> (quoted in the <i>Mabāhij</i>); al-Zamakhsharī, <i>al-Kashshāf</i>; al-Jāhiz, <i>al-Ḥayawān</i>; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, <i>al-‘Iqd al-farīd</i>; Ibn Ishāq, <i>Sīra</i>; Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī, <i>al-Gharīb al-Muṣannaf</i>;<sup>330</sup> Abū Ḥātim, <i>Kitāb al-‘azma</i>; Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī, <i>al-Masālik wa-‘l-mamālik</i> (quoted in the <i>Mabāhij</i>); al-Idrīsī, <i>Nuzhat al-mushtāq ilā ikhtirāq al-āfāq</i> (quoted in the <i>Mabāhij</i>); Ibrāhīm b. Waṣīf Shāh, <i>Kitāb al-‘ajā’ib al-kabīr</i> (quoted in the <i>Mabāhij</i>); al-Jāhiz, <i>al-Nazar fī ‘l-tijāra</i>;<sup>331</sup> al-Jāhiz, <i>Kitāb al-amṣār</i>; al-Qurṭubī, <i>Tafsīr</i>; Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī ‘l-tārīkh</i>; al-Wāqidī, <i>Futūḥ al-Sind</i>.</p>
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<sup>327</sup> The following caveats should be borne in mind when consulting this table. (1) The sources listed are those I have been able to cross-reference against a facsimile edition of the *Mabāhij* and two uncritical editions of its last two *funūn*. (2) Under the heading “sources not transmitted by al-Waṭwāt,” I assume that these sources are not used in the *Mabāhij* because they are not explicitly quoted and because I could not find the same passages in the *Nihāya*. (3) By the same token, the texts listed under “other sources” may not all appear in the *Mabāhij*; some certainly do (and I make a note of that in several places). However, I’ve generally pursued a fairly conservative approach.

<sup>328</sup> Given that al-Maydānī is al-Nuwayrī’s major source for the proverbial material in Book II, I have assumed that this text is also the source for the proverbial chapters in Books I, III, and IV.

<sup>329</sup> These sources are mostly present in al-Waṭwāt, but also include some that I have not been able to cross-reference. Al-Nadwī adds these additional texts: Abū al-Fidā’, *Taqwīm al-buldān*; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam al-buldān*; Qudāma b. Ja’far, *Kitāb al-kharāj*; al-Mas‘ūdī, *al-Tanbīh wa-‘l-ishrāf*, and a few others, none of which I have been able to confirm.

<sup>330</sup> This text is unpublished; al-Nuwayrī believes that it is by al-Tha‘alibī, but the *Nihāya*’s editor believes otherwise.

<sup>331</sup> Also known as *al-Tabaṣṣur fī ‘l-tijāra*.

Table 15 (cont.): Sources of the *Nihāya*, Books I, III, and IV

Book III	<p><b>Primary source:</b> al-Waṭwāt, <i>Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar</i></p> <p><b>Sources not transmitted by al-Waṭwāt:</b> al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dimyātī, <i>Faḍl al-khayl</i>; Ibn Sīnā, <i>al-Qānūn (Kitāb al-mufrada fī ‘l-adwiya)</i>; Abu Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Ḥilyat al-awliyā’</i>; Zubayr b. Bakkār, <i>Jamharat nasab Quraysh wa-akhbāruhā</i>; Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Khaylī, <i>Kitāb al-furūsiyya wa-‘ilājat al-dawābb</i>;<sup>332</sup> al-Marghīnānī, <i>al-Hidāya</i>; Sulayman b. Banīn al-Naḥwī al-Miṣrī, <i>Ālāt al-jihād wa-adawāt al-ṣāfināt al-jiyād</i>; Qāsim b. Thābit, <i>Kitāb al-dalā’il</i>; Ibn Qutayba, <i>Kitāb al-ma‘ārif</i>; Galen (via Ibn Sīnā); Dioscorides (via Ibn Sīnā); Abū ‘l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, <i>Kitāb al-aghānī</i>; al-‘Imād al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kharīdat al-qasr wa-jarīdat al-‘aṣr</i>; al-Tha‘ālibī, <i>Yatīmat al-dahr</i>; al-Tanūkhī, <i>Nishwār al-muḥādara</i>; Aflīmūn (Polemon), <i>Kitāb al-firāsa</i>; Ibn Ḥalab Rāghib, <i>Tārīkh</i>; Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, epistle on hunting (perhaps transmitted through personal correspondence).<sup>333</sup></p> <p><b>Other sources:</b> al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Kitāb al-ḥayawān</i>; Aristotle (via al-Jāḥiẓ); Ibn Abī ‘l-Ash‘ath, <i>al-Ḥayawān</i>; al-Mas‘ūdī, <i>Murūj al-dhahab</i>; various ḥadīth collections (esp. <i>al-Ṣaḥīḥayn</i>); al-Zamakhsharī, <i>al-Kashshāf</i>; Ibn Rashīq, <i>al-‘Umda</i>; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, <i>al-‘Iqd al-farīd</i>; Ibn Durayd, <i>al-Maqṣūra</i>; al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Kitāb al-qawl fī ‘l-bighāl</i>; Usāma b. Munqidh, <i>Azhār al-anhār</i>; Ibn Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī ‘l-tārīkh</i>; Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī’s <i>al-Masālik wa-‘l-mamālik</i>.</p>
Book IV	<p><b>Primary source:</b> al-Waṭwāt, <i>Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-‘ibar</i></p> <p><b>Sources not transmitted by al-Waṭwāt:</b> Ibn Sīna, <i>al-Qānūn (Kitāb al-mufrada fī ‘l-adwiya)</i>; Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Naṣr al-Shīrāzī, <i>al-Idāh fī asrār al-nikāh</i>;<sup>334</sup> al-Tha‘ālibī’s <i>Fiqh al-lughā</i>; al-‘Imād al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kharīdat al-qasr wa-jarīdat al-‘aṣr</i>; Rufus of Ephesus (via Ibn Sīnā); Galen (via Ibn Sīnā);</p>

<sup>332</sup> This book may be extant in manuscript, but I have not been able to find a record of it.

<sup>333</sup> On this epistle, al-Nuwayrī writes: “I have not found, among everything I have researched on this topic, anything more complete than this text, and it is something that a scribe can draw upon for help in writing epistles [on this subject]...” The *risāla* describes a hunting trip, and all the *tuyūr al-wājib*, “the fourteen obligatory birds required for scoring points in competition.” See *Nihāya* 10:328 (DKI: 10:198).

<sup>334</sup> This is how al-Nuwayrī refers to this author; cf. L. A. Giffen, “al-Shayzarī (fl. fourth quarter of the sixth/twelfth century,” *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, eds. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, (London: Routledge, 1998) v. 2, 711.



**Table 15 (cont.): Sources of the *Nihāya*, Books I, III, and IV**

<b>Book IV (cont.)</b>	<p>Hippocrates (via Ibn Sīnā); ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Yamānī, epistle entitled <i>Anwār al-sa’d wa-nuwwār al-majd fī ‘l-mufākhara bayn al-narjis wa-‘l-ward</i>;<sup>335</sup> ‘Alī b. Sahl al-Ṭabarī, <i>Firdaws al-ḥikma fī ‘l-ṭibb</i>; al-Būnī, <i>Laṭā’if al-ishārāt fī asrār al-ḥurūf al-‘ulwiyyāt</i>; Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Zahrāwī, <i>Kitāb al-Zahrāwī</i>;<sup>336</sup> Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī al-Maqdisī, <i>Jayb al-‘arūs wa rayḥān al-nufūs</i>;<sup>337</sup></p> <p><b>Other sources:</b> Ibn Waḥshiyya, <i>Asrār al-qamar</i>; Al-Kindī, <i>Aqrābādhīn</i>;<sup>338</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī’s <i>Murūj</i>; Abu ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī’s <i>Masālik wa mamālik</i>; ‘Alī b. Zāfir al-Azdī, <i>Badā’i’ al-badā’ih</i>; al-Tanūkhī, <i>Nishwār al-muḥāḍara</i>; Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. Ibn al-Tilmīdh, no title given;<sup>339</sup> al-Tha‘ālibī, <i>Siḥr al-balāgha wa-sirr al-barā’a</i>; al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, <i>Qalā’id al-‘Iqyān</i>; Ibn al-Bayṭār, <i>al-Jāmi’ li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-‘l-aghdiya</i>; Abū ‘l-Khayr al-‘Ashshāb, <i>Kitāb al-nabāt</i>;<sup>340</sup> al-Zamakhsharī, <i>Kashshāf</i>; al-Tamīmī, <i>al-Murshid</i>;<sup>341</sup></p>
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<sup>335</sup> This epistle was composed in the year 706/1306. See *Nihāya* 11:207 (DKI: 11:136).

<sup>336</sup> This text could be any of various works by this author that have been lost, but is probably the one that has been preserved, a large compilation entitled *Kitāb al-taṣrīf li-man ‘ajiza ‘an al-ta’līf* (“The Arrangement [of Medical Knowledge] for one who is unable to compile [a manual for himself]”). See Emilie Savage-Smith, “al-Zahrāwī, Abū ‘l-Qāsim Khalaf b. al-‘Abbās,” *EI2*.

<sup>337</sup> According to Aḥmad Zakī Pāsha, principal editor of the *Nihāya*, al-Nuwayrī abridged the first nine chapters of this work, which is no longer extant. See the editor’s introduction to the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya edition of the *Nihāya*, volume 12. Al-Tamīmī’s (d. 380/990) main source was Aḥmad b. Abī Ya‘qūb also known as al-Ya‘qūbī, who lived two generations before him and transmitted his knowledge to al-Tamīmī’s grandfather. The *Jayb al-‘arūs* (also known as *Ṭīb al-‘arūs*) transmits al-Ya‘qūbī’s material, as well as material from Muḥammad b. ‘Abbās al-Miskī, Ḥusayn b. Yazīd al-Sīrāfī, and Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh, a book called *Kitāb al-‘iṭr* in the Bakhtishū’ tradition, and Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī. See also V. Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks, and India: Arabic Text (circa A.D. 1120) with English Translation and Commentary* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1942), 91.

<sup>338</sup> Al-Nuwayrī refers to this source in the introduction to Book IV without mentioning its author, referring to him only as al-Ḥakīm, which could also be a reference to Aristotle. See *Nihāya* 11:2 (DKI: 11:4).

<sup>339</sup> This text is presumably Ibn al-Tilmīdh’s *Aqrābādhīn* (Medical Dispensatory); see Oliver Kahl, *The Dispensary of Ibn al-Tilmīdh: Arabic Text, English Translation, Study, and Glossaries* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>340</sup> This may be Sa’īd b. Hibat Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-‘Ashshāb (d. 1101), the author of *al-Mughnī fī tadbīr al-amrāḍ wa-ma’rifat al-‘ilal wa-‘l-amrāḍ*, a text on medicinal plants.

<sup>341</sup> Al-Waṭwāṭ acknowledges this text as one of his main sources in *Mabāhij* §4.0.

The *Nihāya*'s sources in Books I, III, and IV (which comprise less than one tenth of the total work) are striking for their topical diversity. Alongside literary collections like *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* and *Yatīmat al-dahr* are geographical works, *tafsīrs*, heresiographies, *ḥadīth* collections, dispensatories, lexicographical treatises, chronicles, and specialized monographs on a wide array of subjects, from horses to commerce. While the *Mabāhij* provides the skeleton of Books I, III, and IV and most of their poetry, al-Nuwayrī felt free to excise a fair amount of material that did not interest him and replace it with copious borrowings from other authoritative works, particularly Avicenna's *Kitāb al-mufrada fī ʿl-adwiya* and al-Thaʿālibī's *Fiqh al-lugha*, a lexicographical compilation.

Sorting out the sources for the rest of the *Nihāya* is more difficult, precisely because al-Nuwayrī does not rely on a single text as a model. Scholarly interest in the *Nihāya*'s historical materials has attracted attention to the question of Book V's dependence on earlier chronicles, particularly those that al-Nuwayrī drew upon in composing the enormous final chapter of the work (§5.5.12). Here, we have a rough idea of some of the texts that he used—which included several works by contemporaries such as Baybars al-Manṣūrī's (d. 725/1325) *Zubdat al-fikra*, Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī's (d. 739/1338) *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī's (d. 726/1326) *Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān*, and ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Birzālī's (d. 739/1339) *al-Muqtafā*—but a great deal of work remains if we are to understand how he adjusted and re-worked his sources.<sup>342</sup> A sketch of Book II's sources is presented below.

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<sup>342</sup> On al-Nuwayrī's approach to history, see E. Ashtor, "Some unpublished sources for the Bahrī period," in U. Heyd, ed., *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961), 11-30; Donald Little, *Introduction to Mamluk Historiography*, 24-32; Claude Cahen, "Mea culpa sur Jazarī/Nuwayrī," *Israel Oriental Studies* 3 (1973), 293; Shah Morad Elham, *Kitbugā und Lāğīn, Studien zur Mamluken-Geschichte nach Baybars al-Manṣūrī und Nuwayrī* (Freiburg: Schwarz, 1977), 27-37, 38-43, 54-61, 68-73; Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen*

Table 16: Major Sources for the *Nihāya*, Book II

§	Source Notes
§2.1	Al-Thaʿālibī, <i>Fiqh al-lughā</i> ; al-Maydānī, <i>al-Amthāl</i> ; Ibn al-Jawzī, <i>Dhamm al-hawā</i> ; Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, <i>Dīwān al-maʿānī</i> ; al-Jawwānī al-Nassāba, <i>al-Muqaddima</i>
§2.2	Al-Maydānī, <i>al-Amthāl</i> (§2.2.1);
§2.3	Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, <i>al-ʿIqd al-farīd</i> (§2.3.1 - §2.3.3); Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, <i>Dīwān al-maʿānī</i> ; Ibn Ḥamdūn, <i>al-Tadhkira</i> ; Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-aghānī</i> (§2.3.6); Ibn al-Qaysarānī, <i>Kitāb al-samāʿ</i> ; Al-Ghazālī, <i>Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn</i>
§2.4	Ibn Ḥamdūn, <i>al-Tadhkira</i>
§2.5	Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥalīmī al-Jurjānī, <i>al-Minhāj</i> (§2.5.1, §2.5.10 - §2.5.13); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, <i>al-ʿIqd al-farīd</i> (§2.5.2, §2.5.5 - §2.5.8, §2.5.10, §2.5.14); Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, <i>al-Adab al-kabīr</i> (§2.5.3 - §2.5.4, §2.5.9); Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, <i>Rasāʾil Ibn Muqaffaʿ</i> (§2.5.3 - §2.5.4); ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, <i>Nahj al-balāgha</i> (§2.5.4); Ibn Qutayba, <i>ʿUyūn al-akhbār</i> (§2.5.5 - §2.5.8, §2.5.10); al-Māwardī, <i>Adab al-dīn wa-ʿl-dunyā</i> (§2.5.5 - §2.5.8); al-Māwardī, <i>Qawānīn al-wizāra wa-siyāsāt al-mulk</i> (§2.5.9); al-Māwardī, <i>al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya</i> (§2.5.10 - §2.5.13); Ibn Qutayba, <i>al-Imāma wa-ʿl-siyāsa</i> (§2.5.10); al-Thaʿālibī, <i>Fiqh al-lughā</i> ; Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-aghānī</i> (§2.5.10); Unknown author, <i>Khazāʾin al-silāh</i> (§2.5.10); ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Yamānī, epistle on the subject of weapons (§2.5.10, requested through personal correspondence in the year 707 AH); Ibn Abī ʿl-Iṣbaʿ, <i>Tahrīr al-taḥbīr</i> (§2.5.14); Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, <i>Kitāb al-āthār</i> (§2.5.14); al-Ḥuṣrī, <i>Zahr al-ādāb</i> (§2.5.14); Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, <i>Ḥusn al-tawassul ilā šināʿat al-tarassul</i> (§2.5.14); al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>al-Maḥāsin wa-ʿl-aḍḍāḍ</i> (§2.5.14); Abū Ḥayyan al-Tawḥīdī, <i>Thalāth Rasāʾil</i> (§2.5.14); al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>al-Bayān wa-ʿl-tabyīn</i> (§2.5.14); ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd al-Azdī, <i>Kitāb al-muʿtalif wa-ʿl-mukhtalif</i> (§2.5.14).

*Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg: Schwarz, 1970); idem, “L’édition de la chronique Mamlūke syrienne de Šams al-dīn Muḥammad al-Ġazarī,” in *Bulletin d’Études Orientales de l’Institut Français de Damas* 27 (1974), 195-203; Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ʿInān, *Muʿarrikhū Miṣr al-Islāmiyya* (Cairo 1969), 62-75; S. Kortantamer, *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal b. Abi ʿl-Faḍāʾil* (Freiburg: Schwarz, 1973), 24-7; Li Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997), 32; R. Amitai, “Al-Nuwayrī as a historian of the Mongols,” in Hugh Kennedy, ed., *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 23-36.

The sources for Book II are even more challenging to map than Book V's, given the diversity of topics it embraces. What seems evident from my exploratory attempt to do so is that although al-Nuwayrī did not rely on a single text like the *Mabāhij* in elaborating the structure of this second book, he did typically depend on one or two major sources in each section or chapter, supplementing his borrowings with smaller excerpts from other texts (particularly literary anthologies like *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, al-Ḥuṣrī's *Zahr al-ādāb*, Ibn Bassām's *al-Dhakhīra*, and Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's *Dīwān al-maʿānī*). One might make the tentative case that Book II is essentially a concatenation of large excerpts from a collection of about two dozen major sources.<sup>343</sup>

### **The Adabization of the 'Ulamā' and the Literarization of Historiography**

When surveying al-Nuwayrī's sources, the question arises: how much of this, strictly speaking, is *adab*? The definition of *adab* and its relationship to the concept of *enkuklios paedia* was touched upon in Chapter 1. Long associated with an encyclopaedic outlook, by the 9<sup>th</sup> century "the content of *adab*, or Arab humanitas [had widened] into humanitas without qualification," now incorporating texts and authorities from contexts such as India, Iran, and ancient Greece, thereby acquiring a more cosmopolitan and universal character.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> See also Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Nuwayrī wa-kitābuhu*, 159-63; al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 181-88.

<sup>344</sup> Gabrieli, "Adab," *EI2*. Geert Jan van Gelder helpfully summarizes these early views: "Ibn Sirīn, who died in A.D. 728 and was famous for his piety, said, according to the sources, "Knowledge is too vast to be encompassed; therefore take the best of everything." Here of course, we have the kernel of encyclopedism in a nutshell. On the one hand there is the scholar, the *ʿālim*... someone who possesses *ʿilm*, knowledge of a particular field of learning. On the other hand there is the *adīb*, someone who possesses *adab*, which is a mixture of general erudition and good manners. The difference is nicely expressed in a saying first quoted by the great ninth-century scholar Ibn Qutayba, himself a good example of *ʿālim* and *adīb* combined: "If you want to be a scholar,

What we find in the *Nihāya* is a further expansion of the horizons of *adab*. And yet, a great deal of the older corpus of material anthologized in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century *adab* texts is a mainstay of al-Nuwayrī's work, particularly in Book II. While there are several Mamluk-era texts like the *Mabāhij* and the *Ḥusn al-tawassul* among his sources, there is also an enormous amount of material that is centuries old, originating in the works of al-Jāhiz, Ibn Qutayba, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Ibn Waḥshiyya, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Māwardī, Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, and others. Furthermore, in the poetry he quotes, al-Nuwayrī betrays a decided bias towards the luminaries of the Abbasid period rather than the poets of his own age. A very considerable proportion of the *Nihāya*'s contents could be called "antiquarian" in this regard.

How to interpret these anthological choices?<sup>345</sup> Like the problem of the *Nihāya*'s generic identity, it is a mistake to collapse the issue of contents and sources to a single overriding motive—except, perhaps, for the motive of al-Nuwayrī's self-edification. Rather, I would propose a catalogue of motivations. On the one hand, there is a range of selections that could be described as possessing some kind of technical utility to certain

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you should aim at one field of learning; if you want to be an *adīb*, then take the best of everything.” (See idem, “Compleat men, women, and books,” in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*, edited by Peter Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 244-45.

<sup>345</sup> This question is actually two questions: (1) Why did al-Nuwayrī select the topics that he did; (2) why did he choose the specific sources that he did to represent those topics? The first question is addressed above. The second question is more difficult to resolve because al-Nuwayrī is not consistent in explaining his reasons for using a particular source. One exception is chapter §2.1.4 (“on genealogy,” see *Nihāya* 2:276 [DKI: 2:295-296]). In his introduction to the chapter, al-Nuwayrī identifies his source as al-Jawwānī's *Muqaddima*, and states that he is using this work because its author truly grasped his subject. Another example is sub-chapter §2.3.1.16 (“on apology and entreaty”). Here, al-Nuwayrī begins with an interesting structural observation. He says that he has seen various litterateurs (*ahl al-adab*) connect apology and entreaty with the topic of praise, which is why he has done the same. He names Ibn Ḥamdūn's *Tadhkira* as an example; see *Nihāya*, 3:258-65 (DKI: 3:241-46).

professional types (e.g. the chancery scribe, the financial scribe, the physician, the pharmacist, the copyist, etc.). I am thinking here of the sub-chapters on the chancery and the world of financial administration;<sup>346</sup> the epistles composed by figures such as al-Ḥalabī and other prose stylists;<sup>347</sup> selections from the literature on governance;<sup>348</sup> the medical recipes contained in Book IV; the discussions of calligraphy and manuscript copying at the end of Book II, etc.<sup>349</sup> As I argued in Chapter 2, however, the proportion of these materials within the larger context of the work (and the determinative impact upon its overall character and spirit) has been overemphasized. More extensive than the materials meant to instruct are the copious selections intended to delight. How else to interpret the enormous excerpts from the *Kitāb al-aghānī* and its biographies of famous singers;<sup>350</sup> amusing parables and stories from *Kalīla wa-dimna*;<sup>351</sup> reports about which of the Prophet Muḥammad's companions had the best sense of humor;<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., §2.5.14.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., §1.3.1.16 (al-Babbaghā' on time-keeping instruments); §1.4.5.6 (on mountains); §1.4.6.13-15 (on the sea and ships, by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Abū 'Āmir b. 'Uqāl al-Andalusī, and Ibn al-'Amīd); §3.3.1.2.3 (Tāj al-Dīn al-Yamānī on horses), etc.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., §2.5.1-§2.5.13. Note that al-Nuwayrī also makes the case in the preface to Book V that the study of history is of special interest to rulers and their advisors. I would argue, however, that this justification does not make the historical materials directly relevant to the formation of a scribe or administrative official, but rather broadly relevant to learned culture in general.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 9:214-23 (DKI: 9:133-37).

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., §2.3.6. On al-Nuwayrī's methods of abridging this text, see al-Nadwī, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, chapter 4, section 4.

<sup>351</sup> See, for example, *Nihāya* §2.3.2.12 ("on the stories of deserters who justified fleeing from battle, despite its baseness.")

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., §2.3.3.2 ("On the Prophet's Companions who were famous for joking"). This sub-chapter contains amusing stories about Nu'aymān, one of the Companions at the Battle of Badr.

discussions of Bedouin superstitions like physiognomy and ornithomancy?<sup>353</sup> Very little of this material was directly relevant to anyone's professional duties, and yet it dominates much of the non-historical portions of the *Nihāya*, especially in Book II.

Perhaps the most capacious category of contents, which overlaps substantially with the previous two and in some ways combines them, is what we might describe as material deemed pedagogically salient to the encapsulation of the intellectual and cultural habitus of the Mamluk scholarly elite. To put it in a simpler way, this material defined their *adab*. As Thomas Bauer has argued, the place of *adab* in scholarly culture underwent a significant change beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Following the end of the Ḥamdānīd period (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.) and the beginnings of a “Sunni revival” under the Saljuq rulers, *adab* (both as literature and as a cultural ideal) waned in popularity. In this environment, most scholars turned to non-literary pursuits to distinguish themselves and to find employment in the madrasas established by governors and rich notables.<sup>354</sup>

During the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, however, poetry regained its place of central importance.<sup>355</sup> In addition to classical poetry, this era also witnessed the rise in popularity of folk poetic forms (such as the *muwashshaḥ*, *dūbayt*, and *zajal*), the emergence of the shadow play, the increase in religious poetry, and a great appreciation for epistolography and *maqāmāt*. Purveyors of popular poetry included the middle strata of society, what Margaret Larkin has called a “petite bourgeoisie”

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid, §2.2.3.

<sup>354</sup> Bauer, “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit,”

<sup>355</sup> Bauer, “Anthologies,” *EI*3.

(craftsmen, shopkeepers, etc.), but also, significantly, members of the religious establishment.<sup>356</sup> So, for example, we find figures such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAskalānī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī composing poetry in addition to judges and exegetes like Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd and Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, respectively. There developed a craze among the ʿulamāʾ for anthologizing literature, which served an important sociological function within the intellectual circles of medieval Cairo and Damascus. Their poetry was not composed for political patrons but rather for their fellow scholars, a state of affairs that Bauer characterizes as “mainly a bourgeois phenomenon.” While the absence of a system of court patronage meant that most poets had to make their living as scholars or secretaries, “a flourishing book market in the Mamluk period... provided a more secure income than patronage for an *adīb*.”<sup>357</sup>

The increased involvement by religious scholars in “the profane culture of *adab*” betokens a blending of the two ethics, or what has been called “the adabization of the ʿulamāʾ.”<sup>358</sup> When al-Nuwayrī writes in chapter §2.5.14 about the importance of cultivating one’s eloquence and erudition through the study of *adab*, what he has in mind is something perhaps not so different from what today’s proponents of liberal arts education champion: the exposure to a certain worldview, an intellectual habitus, a cultural vocabulary. A considerable amount of the material that al-Nuwayrī deemed to

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<sup>356</sup> Margaret Larkin, “Popular Poetry in the Post-Classical Period, 1150-1850,” in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, eds. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 191-242.

<sup>357</sup> Bauer, “In search of ‘Post-Classical Literature’,” 154-55.

<sup>358</sup> “Eager to find pleasure in literature, to improve their literary knowledge, and to gain social prestige as cognoscenti of literature and the subtleties of the Arabic language, this bourgeois public engendered a broad demand for literary works, especially in the form of anthologies.” Bauer, “Anthologies,” *EI3*.



be worth including in the *Nihāya* was reflective of the valorization of highly informed, intertextual, *recherche* engagements with the Arabic literary heritage.

The importance of *adab* to Mamluk scholarly culture can also be seen in the increased literarization of historiography, as observed by Ulrich Haarmann, Bernd Radtke, Li Guo, and others.<sup>359</sup> Chronicles written during this period, particularly by Syrian historians, contain a striking amount of poetry and literary prose. Guo has proposed that “a good *tārīkh* (history) is not only a record of factual events, but a register of Muslim religious learning and a selective anthology of Arabic cultural heritage.”<sup>360</sup> On this point, it is worth noting how al-Nuwayrī’s text is both emblematic of the broader dynamic and also somewhat exceptional. While the *Nihāya* combines history and *adab*, the former is presented as subordinate to the latter. In other words, al-Nuwayrī’s project is a totalization of *adab*, an interpretation of this category as an umbrella for a huge range of disciplines and genres, including history. But it is also a systematization of this enormous field. History, in al-Nuwayrī’s hands, is not particularly literary.<sup>361</sup> As we saw in Chapter III, he is very conscious about ensuring

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<sup>359</sup> See Ulrich Haarmann, “Auflösung und Bewahrung der klassischen Formen arabischer Geschichteschreibung in der Zeit der Mamluken,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 121 (1971), 46-60; idem, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*; Bernd Radtke, “Die Literarisierung der Mamlukischen Historiografie. Versuch einer Selbstkritik,” in *O ye, Gentlemen. Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in Honour of Remke Kruk*, edited by A. Vrolijk and J. Hogendijk (Leiden: Brill, 2007): 263-75; Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī’s Dhayl Mir’āt al-zamān* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 87-94.

<sup>360</sup> Li Guo, “The Middle Baḥrī Mamluks in medieval Syrian historiography: The years 1297-1302 in the “*Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zaman*,” attributed to Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī,” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1994, abstract.

<sup>361</sup> If we take the quantity of cited poetry as an imperfect but convenient token of the “literariness” of a chronicle, the *Nihāya*’s Book V stands out as significantly less literary than the previous four Books. By my rough count, it contains about 3300 lines of poetry, compared to about 1500 in Book I, 8500 in Book II, 1650 in Book III; and 1400 in Book IV. When we take into account the dramatically larger size of Book V vis-à-vis the rest of the *Nihāya*, these differences

that materials are slotted in their appropriate place. Historical narratives belong in Book V; poetry and literary prose belong, for the most part, in the rest of the *Nihāya*.

All of it, however, was *adab*, which brings us back to the issue of al-Nuwayrī's anthological choices. I have argued above that the contents of the *Nihāya* should be read as a reflection of culture rather than practice. Does this mean that most of the older material he transmitted was valued only for rhetorical purposes? Or did he regard it as possessing some kind of epistemological authenticity? I conclude this chapter by considering this question.

### **The Judge, the Sufi, and the Cow: al-Nuwayrī's Epistemological Ecumenism**

In his discussion of the events of the year 613/1216 in Book V of the *Nihāya*, al-Nuwayrī relates a story about the dismissal of the Shāfi'ī chief judge 'Imād al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd al-'Alī b. 'Alī al-Sukkarī from his post, as a result of his refusal to approve the appointment of a certain official to the financial supervision (*naẓr*) of a particular madrasa.<sup>362</sup> The sultan at the time, al-'Ādil Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Ayyūb, was angered by the chief judge's impertinence, and so he dismissed him from the chief judgeship as well as from his position as head preacher at the al-Ḥākim Mosque in Cairo. Such reports on the hirings and firings of state officials are abundant in the final volumes of

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mean that al-Nuwayrī quoted an average of one line of poetry for every two pages of his chronicle, compared to six lines of poetry per page in Books I, III, and IV, and nearly 5 lines per page in Book II.

<sup>362</sup> See *Nihāya* 29:72-75 (DKI: 29:46-48). The madrasa in question is not named, but is referred to as the one endowed by the Ayyūbid governor Ibrāhīm b. Shurūh. The official that 'Imād al-Dīn al-Sukkarī refused to appoint was the judge of Qūṣ, who is also not named.

the *Nihāya*, and this particular narrative is unremarkable except for a curious interjection by al-Nuwayrī at the end.

After naming the officials who replaced the judge, he writes: “This was the apparent reason (*al-sabab al-zāhir lil-nās*) for the dismissal of the judge ‘Imād al-Dīn Ibn al-Sukkarī. As for the true and hidden reason (*al-sabab al-bāṭin*), it was told to me by my father...who heard it from his grandfather Zakī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Dāyim and others.” The ensuing story begins by introducing a Sufi shaykh and jurist named Raḍī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Uqaylī who had immigrated from the Maghrib to al-Nuwayrī’s ancestral village of al-Nuwayra, where he became a notable of sorts. Al-Nuwayrī’s great-grandfather Zakī al-Dīn was one of the shaykh’s most devoted followers and attendants, with whom he developed a special bond.<sup>363</sup> Due to his ethical reputation and social position, Raḍī al-Dīn was made the representative of the chief judge ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Sukkarī in al-Nuwayra, where he was responsible for settling legal disputes, such as the following:

It so happened that two men challenged each other over the ownership of a cow. So one of them wrote a record (*maḥḍar*) claiming that the cow was his, and a group of witnesses testified to its authenticity. They took their testimony to the jurist [the shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn], and all that remained was to hand the cow over to the man with the record of ownership. The jurist studied the cow and peered at it. The man with the record asked him for his ruling, and if he would award him the cow. [Raḍī al-Dīn] responded: “How can I give her to you, when she tells me that she belongs to your opponent and that your record is forged?” And so he gave her to his opponent, and the man who had presented the [false] evidence confessed to the truth of what the shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn had said about the cow, and he repented. When the news of this event reached the judge ‘Imād al-Dīn, he wrote to the shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn saying: “In this case, you should have ruled according to the letter of the law and awarded the cow to the one who

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<sup>363</sup> See *ibid.*, 29:74 (DKI: 29:46): *ikhtaṣṣa bi-khidmatihī...fa-kāna akhaṣṣa ‘l-nās bihi wa-a’lāhum manzilatan ‘indahū.*

provided evidence.” So, he dismissed the shaykh from his post as his representative. When the news of his dismissal reached him, [the shaykh] said to those around him: “Bear witness to the fact that I have dismissed *him*, and his descendants as well!” [‘Imad al-Dīn] was dismissed within the hour.<sup>364</sup>

This story, al-Nuwayrī concludes, is one that he does not doubt, and is well-known to many people.<sup>365</sup> What to make of it? From our modern perspective, al-Nuwayrī’s comments seem to give him away as a silly medieval, gullible enough to believe that a chief judge’s dismissal was the product of a provincial shaykh’s spooky Sufi mind trick. On the other hand, the story is a revealing instance of al-Nuwayrī’s method of working with contradictory truth claims in the *Nihāya*. What is remarkable about it is not that he found the story told by his great-grandfather more compelling than the official narrative, but rather that he stated this opinion so unequivocally at the end of the episode. In most cases where he courts a range of contradictory views on an issue—and there are thousands of such cases in the *Nihāya*—al-Nuwayrī is far more circumspect about his views. His epistemological outlook is generally ecumenical, marked by charity rather than dogmatism, which is itself a charitable way of saying that his attitude to the authority of his sources is deferential.<sup>366</sup> Skepticism—on display in the anecdote about the judge, the Sufi, and the cow—is not a side of al-Nuwayrī’s personality as a compiler that we often see.

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 29:74–75 (DKI: 29:47).

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 29:75 (DKI: 29:48); *hādhihi ‘l-ḥikāya alladhī dhakartuhā lā ashukku fihā wa-lā artābu, wa-hiya mashhūra ya‘rifuhā kathīr min al-nās*.

<sup>366</sup> For one perspective on the difference between al-Nuwayrī’s attitude towards his authorities and al-‘Umarī’s, see Blachère, “Quelques réflexions.”

Let us consider another example: the extensive larding of the *Nihāya*'s botanical chapters (inherited mostly from al-Waṭwāṭ's *Mabāhij*) with quotes from two very different sources. For remedies rooted in Galenic humoral medicine, al-Nuwayrī turns to Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-adwiya al-mufrada* ('Book of Simple Drugs'). Alongside this material are copious borrowings from the esoteric writings of Ibn Waḥshiyya (d. 318/930-1), in particular his magical-agronomical text, *Asrār al-qamar* ('The Moon's Secrets').<sup>367</sup> The quotes from Ibn Waḥshiyya provide the reader with procedures for growing vegetables using a variety of strange ingredients. For example:

If you would like to grow cabbage (*al-kurunb*), take four goat hooves and soak them in lard three times, then put them in the ground. Cover them with the hair from a billy goat's beard (*sha'r liḥyat al-tays*), then bury everything in sand and throw some soil on top. Cabbage will grow from it.<sup>368</sup>

...

If you take the horns of a boar and slather them with oil (*dahantumūhumā bi-l-zayt*), and place a piece of camel dung on each end of the two horns and bury them in the ground, from that will grow good sweet carrots (*al-jazar al-ḥulw al-jayyid*).<sup>369</sup>

...

If you would like pistachios, take a goat's kidney, slit it open and bury a bone from a peacock's spine inside it. Then sprinkle some fumewort (*shāhtaraj*) over it and put it in the ground. After twenty-seven days, a pistachio tree will grow from it.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> On Ibn Waḥshiyya, see Jaakko Hämeem-Anttila, "Ibn Waḥshiyya and Magic," *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 10 (1999): 39-48; idem, *The Last Pagans of Iraq: Ibn Waḥshiyya and his Nabatean Agriculture* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). The text that al-Nuwayrī cites may exist in manuscript under a different name: *Asrār al-falak fī aḥkām al-nujūm*. See *ibid.*, 361.

<sup>368</sup> *Nihāya*, 11:48 (DKI: 11:38). The term *liḥyat al-tays* also refers to the plant salsify (i.e., goatsbeard, *Tragopogon porrifolius*). In this case, because Ibn Waḥshiyya specifically uses the word "hair" (*sha'r*), it seems he is referring to an actual goat's beard.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:55 (DKI: 11:41).

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:92 (DKI: 11:62).

It is very unlikely that al-Nuwayrī believed that the cabbage, carrots, and pistachios he purchased in the markets of Cairo were grown in the countryside using goat horns, camel dung, and peacock bones. As library-bound as he may have been toward the end of his life, al-Nuwayrī had grown up in a rural setting and had also spent a great deal of time among farmers during his career as a financial inspector. Other sections of the *Nihāya* contain detailed information about agricultural practices in Syria and the traditions of sugar-cane farming in the environs of Qūṣ, the place of his childhood.<sup>371</sup> What, then, was the purpose of transmitting such obviously nonsensical material from Ibn Waḥshiyya? Some insight can be found in the preface to Book IV, where he begins by admitting that his aim has not been to contain the subject of plants entirely, a task that many have failed at, including

the philosophers and sages, the most famous physicians, the inhabitants of the desert, and those who congregate in city squares or village gatherings. Each one of them revealed something that the rest did not, and observed something that no one else imagined. The Turkoman knew something that the Bedouin did not, and the mountain-dweller (*jabalī*) knew something that the desert-dweller (*nabaṭī*) did not. The sages wrote long books on this subject, revealing every hidden benefit and characteristic among the useful and harmful properties [of plants]... and despite all of that, they were not able to contain the subject... My intention in presenting it has been to relate literary descriptions by the poets, and literary epistles by the eloquent ones, because that is what the attendant of literary gatherings (*muḥāḍir, jalīs, musāmir*) is in need of and depends upon. The scribe benefits from it in his secretaryship, and the epistlographer's means of effective communication are thus broadened.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> See Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "L'agriculture de l'Empire Mamluk au Moyen Age d'après al-Nuwayrī," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 22, no. 85-88 (1974): 23-45; Sato Tsugitaka, "Fiscal Administration in Syria during the Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad," *Mamluk Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2007): 19-37.

<sup>372</sup> *Nihāya*, 11:1-4 (DKI: 11:2-3).

The principle that guides al-Nuwayrī's method of selection in Book IV is not so different from the well-known apothegm associated with Pliny the Elder: "There is no book so bad that some good cannot be got from it."<sup>373</sup> As Ann Blair has shown, this maxim and variants upon it appears in the works of a range of Renaissance encyclopaedists, for whom "Pliny was the model encyclopedist...and his license to read and learn from every possible source was invoked by various authors engaged in large scale collecting," such as Conrad Gesner, Gabriel Naudé, Marin Mersenne, and Theodor Zwinger.<sup>374</sup> Al-Nuwayrī justifies the riotous range of sources that provide the material for Book IV using the same logic: Ibn Sīnā, whom al-Nuwayrī venerates and always refers to as *al-shaykh al-ra'īs* (an appellation he did not copy from al-Waṭwāt's *Mabāhij*), does not have a monopoly on the knowledge of plants, and one could only benefit from reading him alongside the writings of an Ibn Waḥshiyya.

This catholic approach to the transmission of knowledge was not unique to al-Nuwayrī's text. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Mamluk compilatory industry has often been described (usually disparagingly) as an enterprise interested first and foremost in the accumulation of knowledge, and only secondarily in parsing and sifting it.<sup>375</sup> I have made the case that al-Nuwayrī was a particularly fastidious and self-consciously exacting compiler, one who mapped out his enormous book in such detail as to be able

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<sup>373</sup> "Dicere etiam solebat nullum esse librum tam malum ut non aliqua parte prodesset." Pliny the Younger, *Letters and Panegyricus*, trans. Betty Radice, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 1:176-77.

<sup>374</sup> Blair, "Revisiting Renaissance Encyclopaedism." (I am grateful to Ann Blair for making available to me a draft of this article prior to its publication, which is forthcoming).

<sup>375</sup> The term "compilatory industry" was used by König and Whitmarsh to describe the production of composite sources in the Roman Empire (see idem, *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, 4).

to cross-reference regularly between chapters and sub-chapters, and whose autograph manuscripts are remarkably free of corrections and additions, even for fair copies (see Appendix C). How, then, to make sense of his deliberate inclusion of genres and discourses that present mutually incompatible worldviews, or even contradictory truth claims? Al-Nuwayrī's valorization, in the preface to Book IV, of a cumulative approach to encompassing a subject (and echoed in Pliny's principle) tells part of the story. I believe that another relevant dimension to consider is al-Nuwayrī's training in *ḥadīth*, which is detectable in the way that he makes room in his text for a wide range of authorities.

As his biographers inform us, al-Nuwayrī supported himself during the period in which he composed the *Nihāya* by making and selling copies of al-Bukhārī's *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. I have located one of these copies (see Appendix C), which confirms that al-Nuwayrī was connected with the well-known redactor of al-Bukhārī's collection, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī (d. 701/1302), the older half-brother of the historian Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, whose chronicle *Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān* was one of al-Nuwayrī's main sources for Book V. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī's redaction, which forms the basis for the version of al-Bukhārī's collection that is in use today, is known for its painstaking attention to the different variants of individual *ḥadīths*. Al-Yūnīnī relied upon several authorities, both oral and written, in producing his redaction, as mapped by Rosemary Quiring-Zoche in an admirable recent study.<sup>376</sup> Al-Nuwayrī's copy of the work preserves

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<sup>376</sup> Rosemary Quiring-Zoche, "How al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* was Edited in the Middle Ages: 'Alī al-Yūnīnī and his *Rumūz*," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 50 (1998): 191-222. See also Alphonse Mingana, *An Important Manuscript of the Traditions of al-Bukhārī* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1936); Johann Fück, "Beiträge zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Buḥārī's Traditionssammlung," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft* 92 (1938): 60-82; Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Mashyakhāt Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī: takhrīj Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ ibn Abī*



al-Yūnīnī's editorial apparatus, listing variants in the margins of the text, and faithfully copying all of the audition and collation statements at the end of the exemplar from which he copied the work.<sup>377</sup>

A training in *ḥadīth* provided al-Nuwayrī with many of the conceptual and material tools he needed to produce a large-scale compilation like the *Nihāya*, but I would like to tentatively propose that it informed his epistemological outlook in important ways as well. His chapters on the subject of the permissibility of singing and playing music (§2.3.6.2 - §2.3.6.4) are an interesting case in point. Drawing upon works by Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibn al-Qaysarānī, al-Ghazālī, and Abū Ḥatim (author of the *Kitāb al-ḍu'afā'*), he presents an extended discussion of the various *ḥadīths* relevant to this subject, including some contradictory ones deemed “sound” (*ṣaḥīḥ*) by the canonical collections, as well as some weak or possibly even forged *ḥadīths*.<sup>378</sup> Explaining these evidentiary standards requires a broader inquiry into the area of the epistemological dimensions of *ḥadīth* studies, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation and has, at

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*al-Faḍl al-Ba'labakkī ; ma'a mulḥaq min 'awālī Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī bi-riwāyat mu'arrikh al-Islām al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmuri (Ṣaydā: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2002).

<sup>377</sup> For al-Nuwayrī's obituary of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, see *Nihāya* 32:16-17 (DKI: 32:8). In it, he states: “He occupied himself with [redacting] al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* through all of its channels (*min sā'ir ṭuruqihī*), and he exactly edited his own copy (*ḥarrara nuskhatahu taḥrīran shāfiyan*), giving each channel its own abbreviation (*ja'ala li-kull ṭarīq ishāratān*), and adding correct marginal annotations (*ḥawāshī ṣaḥīḥa*). I have copied al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* from his model seven times, and I edited it just as he did, and collated it against his own model, which was the model upon which I performed my audition with al-Ḥajjār and Wazīra (*qābaltu bi-aṣlihi wa-huwa aṣl samā'i 'alā al-Ḥajjār wa-Wazīra*).

<sup>378</sup> See *ibid.*, 4:133-168 (DKI: 4:134-61). 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Nadwī finds this tendency to be problematic. While al-Nuwayrī, he says, does not quote *ḥadīths* that go against the pillars of Islam or other religious topics, he is not opposed to quoting them in other areas. Al-Nadwī proposes that this is because the '*ulamā'* permitted argumentation on the basis of weak or forged hadiths as long as it did not violate a matter of widespread consensus, especially on issues unconnected with religion, like *adab*. See *idem*, *Manhaj al-Nuwayrī*, 109-10.

any rate, only recently begun to attract serious scholarly attention. My sense is that the important work of Wael Hallaq, Jonathan Brown, and others, on the questions of certainty and authenticity in the *ḥadīth* canon will shed interesting light on the methodologies of Mamluk-era encyclopaedists and historiographers, most of whom were thoroughly steeped in the study of *ḥadīth*.<sup>379</sup>

## Conclusion

In an article about tradition and innovation in medieval Islamic education, Jonathan Berkey discusses a small 15<sup>th</sup>-century Cairene madrasa called the Jawhariyya. In addition to providing instruction in Islamic law, the school was known for being the home of a magical pearl and a talismanic bowl inscribed with Qur'ānic verses, which were said to relieve ailments associated with the urinary tract. People would visit the school, put the pearl in the bowl with some water, remove the pearl, and drink the water. While the use of magical pearls was certainly not new in Near Eastern medical traditions, Berkey proposes that this example is particularly interesting because of

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<sup>379</sup> Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, the brother of al-Bukhārī's redactor, came from a family of *ḥadīth* specialists. Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī attended the lectures of al-Nuwayrī's *ḥadīth* teacher Wazīra bt. Munajjā (see *Nihāya*, 32:235, DKI: 32:188). Al-Birzālī was, according to Ibn Taymiyya, the scholar who instilled in him the interest in studying *ḥadīth* (see Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, 78). Many other examples of the importance of *ḥadīth* to Mamluk-era compilers and especially historians could be cited. For studies relevant to the epistemological dimensions of *ḥadīth*, see Jonathan Brown, "Did the Prophet Say it or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of *Ḥadīths* in Early Sunnism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129, no. 2 (Apr-June 2009): 259-85; idem, "How We Know Early *Ḥadīth* Critics Did *Matn* Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find," *Islamic Law & Society* 15 (2008): 143-184; idem, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 42-46, 262-299; Wael Hallaq, "The Authenticity of Prophetic *Ḥadīth*: A Pseudo-Problem," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 75-90; Aron Zysow, "The Economy of Certainty: An Introduction to the Typology of Muslim Legal Theory," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1984, 14-49; Bernard Weiss, *The Search for God's Law* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1992), 259-321.

the close spatial proximity of cultural processes and artefacts which, at first glance, seem to be so different: on one hand, the disciplined transmission of religious knowledge, of the legal and theological sciences which lie at the core of the Islamic identity, of what some would call “high” culture; on the other, a medicinal cure clearly drawn from the deep well of folk memory, a cure with only the thinnest Islamic veneer, in the form of those inscribed Qur’ānic verses, which barely conceals its pre-Islamic origin...<sup>380</sup>

The institutions that al-Nuwayrī lived in and oversaw during his career were centers of a similarly complex and creative range of intellectual discourses and values. The Nāṣiriyya Madrasa taught the four major rites of Sunni Islamic law and shared an exterior wall with the Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī, where students attended lectures on medicine by the chief physician who, in his spare time, oversaw the suspension of trembling viper pastilles in honey. Similarly, the *Nihāya* might be read as a textual reflection of the scholarly spaces from which it emerged. In its pages, the profane rubs up against the sacred, the quotidian jostles for space with the philosophical, the solemn stands unruffled by the whimsical. Effecting such a synthesis requires an expository ground that is supremely supple, unfettered by the conventions and constricted vision of individual disciplines, but structured enough as to enable the access and retrieval of its contents.

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<sup>380</sup> Jonathan P. Berkey, “Tradition, Innovation and the Social Construction of Knowledge in the Medieval Near East,” *Past & Present* 146 (Feb., 1995), 39-40. Berkey further argues: “In the end, the tension between tradition and custom, between *sunna* and *bid’a*, points to a fluidity and a creativity within the social process of constructing knowledge in the medieval Islamic world.... The close and apparently symbiotic (or at least unproblematic) relationship of two very different cultural processes, in an institution established specifically to support the transmission of knowledge, poses fundamental questions about the character of that “knowledge” which medieval Islamic societies prized so highly - questions, that is, about its relationship to broader patterns of cultural life.” (40)

In seeking to orient himself within the endless desert of *adab*, al-Nuwayrī left to posterity a work that was a remarkably inclusive reflection of the society and intellectual traditions of which it was a part, excluding little on the grounds of disciplinary or doctrinal antipathies. This work, as I have shown in this chapter, brought together a diverse range of learned discourses and fashioned something altogether new by combining them. That this was achieved by a bureaucrat and amateur litterateur like al-Nuwayrī and not a professional scholar or poetic celebrity says something about the intellectual and literary culture to which al-Nuwayrī sought access and the resources available to him to do so.

I will close with the following thought. Historical inquiry tends toward the study of origins, formative phases, ruptures, and revolutionary moments. One of the most interesting aspects of a text like the *Nihāya*, from my perspective, is that it belongs to a self-consciously post-formative phase in the development of an intellectual tradition. Al-Nuwayrī did not regard himself as a compiler in the mold of a Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. 337/948), who aimed to summarize the principles of the various disciplines that were beginning to come together in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, developing a center of gravity and a sense of self-confidence and maturity.<sup>381</sup> Al-Nuwayrī was writing several centuries after those disciplines had already formed; his project was necessarily different from Qudāma’s. Bearing in mind the problems associated with the term “post-classical,” it surely did not escape al-Nuwayrī that he was certainly *post*-something. The thousands of books populating the shelves of the Nāṣiriyya’s library were part of an

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<sup>381</sup> Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, *Kitāb al-kharāj wa-ṣināʿat al-kitāba*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt: Maʿhad Taʾrīkh al-ʿUlūm al-ʿArabiyya wa-ʿl-Islāmiyya fī iṭār Jāmiʿat Frankfurt, 1986); Heck, *The Construction of Knowledge in Islamic Civilization*; Heinrichs, “The Classification of the Sciences.”

intellectual tradition and a cultural archive impossible for a scholar or even a curious amateur to ignore. Some of these books were written by his contemporaries; others originated in a world nearly as chronologically distant from al-Nuwayrī as we are today. In this sense, the question of why this particular text was composed at this particular moment has at least one simple answer: because it could be. The very fact of a work like the *Nihāya* is predicated on its posteriority.

## CONCLUSION

Many of the studies that have shaped my approach to this project analyze encyclopaedic texts as tokens of specific intellectual currents. Ann Blair has examined Jean Bodin's *Theatrum* in light of pre-Baconian natural history in 16<sup>th</sup> century France; Mary Franklin-Brown considers the works of Vincent de Beauvais and other 13<sup>th</sup>-century encyclopaedists through the prism of a revisionist reading of scholasticism; Howard Hotson reads Alsted through the tradition of 16<sup>th</sup> century Central European Ramism; Tomáš Záhora situates Alexander Neckam's works in the paradigms of tropology and 13<sup>th</sup> century *physica*; Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh see Roman encyclopaedism as a characteristically imperial discourse; and so on.<sup>382</sup>

My reading of the *Nihāya* has similarly sought to situate this work within its social, intellectual, and material contexts. I argue that various processes of political, demographic, administrative, and institutional centralization in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century played an important role in both facilitating and engendering the production of compilatory literature by scholars in the Mamluk Empire. Al-Nuwayrī's professional activities as a clerk in the Mamluk bureaucracy set him on his path as an encyclopaedic compiler not because (as has been widely supposed) his work was conceived as a technical manual for the chancery scribe, but rather because his tour through the various government *dīwāns* across the Mamluk realms immersed him within the world

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<sup>382</sup> See Blair, *The Theater of Nature*; Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications, 1543-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Záhora, "The Tropological Universe,"; König and Whitmarsh, eds., *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*. I am very grateful to Mary Franklin-Brown for sharing chapter drafts with me prior to the publication of her work.

of the civilian elite and their institutions of higher learning. As was the case at many other moments in medieval Islamic history, *adab* played an essential role in the culture and education of learned individuals. However, what sets this period apart is the increased interpenetration and blending of the language, ethics, and textual expressions of *adab* with the culture of religious learning.

My study of the *Nihāya*'s structural hierarchies, cross-references, and content distribution in Chapter 3 presented a kind of "x-ray" of the work, exposing its functional logic and the epistemological givens that it encodes. It revealed al-Nuwayrī's book to be a taxonomic systematization of the now expanded field of *adab*, incorporating genres and disciplines once deemed outside its purview. A comparison between the *Nihāya*'s chapter sequences and seven paradigmatic "*adab* encyclopaedias" demonstrated the many differences between al-Nuwayrī's text and the older anthological models, differences which may reflect a more consultative mode of reading in the Mamluk context. A more thorough-going examination of the *Nihāya*'s surviving autographs is necessary to explore this hypothesis further, which is a task for the next stage of this project. The study of autograph manuscripts remains at an early stage among scholars of the Mamluk period, and al-Nuwayrī's text would seem to be a prime candidate for a detailed reconstruction of working methods and readership based upon an analysis of marginalia, corrections, traces of handling visible to densitometers, etc.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> For a pioneering example of autograph manuscript analysis, see Frédéric Bauden, "Maqriziana II: Discovery of an Autograph Manuscript of al-Maqrīzī: Towards a Better Understanding of his Working Method Analysis," *Mamluk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 51-118. For a promising approach to the study of how medieval manuscripts were physically handled, see Kathryn Rudy, "Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2, nos. 1-2 (2012).

In my fourth chapter, I examined al-Nuwayrī's incorporation of al-Waṭwāt's *Mabāhij al-fīkar wa-manāhij al-'ibar* into Books I, III, IV. The study of the *Nihāya*'s sources revealed that the texts occupying a privileged position and holding authoritative status from al-Nuwayrī's perspective were drawn from an enormous range of disciplines and time periods. This gives us a sense, in the first instance, of the size of the library available to al-Nuwayrī as he assembled his compilation. It also tells us something about his epistemological outlook, which could be characterized as ecumenical in its mediation of different modes of scholarly discourse and truth claims. My hypothesis is that this outlook was likely engendered by, among other things, al-Nuwayrī's training in *ḥadīth*, which required a similarly expansive, inclusive, and charitable approach to the canon of traditions attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

### **Next steps**

One of my not-so-hidden agendas in this dissertation has been to approach obliquely the question of why this period witnessed an explosion of large-scale compilation. As I reach the end of this preliminary stage of my work on al-Nuwayrī, I feel that this question remains open. Certainly, much of the discussion in Chapter 2 on al-Nuwayrī's intellectual and institutional milieus is relevant to many of his contemporaries, but it would be a mistake to assume that other compilers—even those with similar backgrounds as professional administrators and amateur scholars—composed their literary anthologies, encyclopaedic collections, classifications of the sciences, manuals, and dictionaries for the same reasons that moved al-Nuwayrī to produce the *Nihāya*. There is no need to suggest that any of the various proposals entertained and debated



in this dissertation—from scholarly stasis and information overload to the fear of the destruction of the Islamic intellectual heritage—is the correct answer to this question. The literature is vast and varied. Arriving at some cumulative sense of the motives, methods, and mindsets of the Mamluk compilers requires incorporating more texts into this study. This, I hope, will form the basis of the next stage of this project.

Another direction I intend to pursue is the reception of the *Nihāya* in the Islamic world and Europe. The digitization of classical Arabic texts facilitates the study of al-Nuwayrī’s influence on later compilers, and some preliminary results are suggestive. Coupled with the analysis of ownership statements on later manuscripts of the *Nihāya*, this research angle would shed interesting light on what portions of the text continued to be copied and circulated in the centuries following his death. The European engagement with the *Nihāya*—beginning with Johannes Heyman’s notes on the text, preserved at Leiden and as yet unstudied—is an area that deserves further examination.

## Appendix A: The *Nihāya*'s Table of Contents

This appendix contains a translation of the *Nihāya*'s table of contents, as it appears in the first volume of the work. The outline format I use below is meant to facilitate consultation, whereas in most manuscripts of the *Nihāya* the table of contents lists the book, section, and chapter titles in a uniform text block without shifting margins or numerical abbreviations. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, al-Nuwayrī does not include the sub-chapters (*fuṣūl*) in his table of contents (with two exceptions, noted below). While an exhaustive table of contents listing all of the sub-chapters in the work would be a desideratum, it would make this appendix perhaps twenty times as long as it already is. As such, I have compromised by providing additional information on certain sub-chapters (particularly in Books III and IV) in the footnotes.

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- 1.0. **The First Book, on the heavens and the meteorological phenomena** (*al-āthār al-‘ulwiyya*), and the earth and the lowermost localities (*al-ma‘ālim al-suflīyya*)
  - 1.1. On the heavens (*al-samā’*) and what they contain
    - 1.1.1. On the creation of the heavens (*fī mabda’ khalq al-samā’*)
    - 1.1.2. On the structure of the heavens (*fī hay’atihā*)
    - 1.1.3. On the angels
    - 1.1.4. On the seven planets (*al-kawākib al-sab‘a*) [the five visible planets plus the sun and the moon]
    - 1.1.5. On the fixed stars (*al-kawākib al-thābita*)
  - 1.2. On the meteorological phenomena (*al-āthār al-‘ulwiyya*)
    - 1.2.1. On clouds and the reason for their occurrence, and on snow and hail;
    - 1.2.2. On shooting stars (*ṣawā’iq*), thunderbolts (*nayāzik*), thunder (*ra’d*), and lightning (*barq*).
    - 1.2.3. On the element (*uṣṭuquṣ*) of wind
    - 1.2.4. On the element of fire, and its names.
  - 1.3. On the nights, days, months, years, natural seasons (*fuṣūl*), festivals (*mawāsim*), and holidays (*a’yād*)
    - 1.3.1. On the nights and days
    - 1.3.2. On the months and years
    - 1.3.3. On the natural seasons
    - 1.3.4. On the festivals and holidays
  - 1.4. On the earth, mountains, seas, islands (*jazā’ir*), rivers, and springs (*‘uyūn*)
    - 1.4.1. On the creation of the earth (*fī mabda’ khalq al-arḍ*)
    - 1.4.2. On the classification (*tafṣīl*) of the names of the earth
    - 1.4.3. On the length (*tūl*) of the earth and its area (*misāḥa*)
    - 1.4.4. On the seven climes
    - 1.4.5. On the mountains
    - 1.4.6. On the seas and the islands
    - 1.4.7. On the rivers, streams (*ghudrān*), and springs

- 1.5. On the physical qualities of the geographic localities (*ṭabāʾiʿ al-bilād*), and the dispositions (*akhlāq*) of their inhabitants, their attributes (*khaṣāʾiṣ*), ancient buildings, fortresses, palaces, and dwellings
  - 1.5.1. On the physical qualities of the geographic localities and the dispositions of their inhabitants
  - 1.5.2. On the attributes of the territories
  - 1.5.3. On ancient buildings
  - 1.5.4. On descriptions of fortresses
  - 1.5.5. On descriptions of palaces and dwellings
  
- 2.0. **The Second Book, on the human being and that which relates to him**
  - 2.1. On the etymology (*ishtiḳāq*), naming (*tasmiya*), life stages (*tanaqqulāt*), and natures (*ṭabāʾiʿ*) of the human being; and on the description and similes of his body parts (*aʿḍāʾ*); and on love poetry (*ghazal*), erotic preludes (*nasīb*), love (*maḥabba*), passion (*ʿishq*), desire (*hawā*); and genealogy (*ansāb*).
    - 2.1.1. On the etymology, naming, life stages, and nature of the human being
    - 2.1.2. On the descriptions and similes of the human being's body parts. And among what is described is: sweetness of breath; good speech and voice quality (*naghama*); erectness of posture; and the manner in which women walk.
    - 2.1.3. On amorous and erotic poetry, desire, love, and passion
    - 2.1.4. On genealogy
  - 2.2. On the famous stories (*amthāl*) about the Prophet and the Companions; the well-known proverbs of the [pre-Islamic] Arabs and their superstitious practices (*awābid*); the stories of the soothsayers, omens and ornithomancy (*al-zajr wa ʿl-faʿl wa ʿl-tīra*), physiognomy (*firāsa*), induction (*dhakāʾ*), euphemisms and metonymies (*kināyāt*), allusion (*taʾrīḍ*), enigmas (*aḥājī*), and riddles (*alghāz*).
    - 2.2.1. On stories and proverbs (*amthāl*)
    - 2.2.2. On the superstitious practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs
    - 2.2.3. On the stories of the soothsayers, omens and ornithomancy, physiognomy, and induction;
    - 2.2.4. On euphemisms and metonymies, and allusions;
    - 2.2.5. On enigmas and riddles
  - 2.3. On praise (*madḥ*), invective (*hajw*), entertaining anecdotes (*mujūn*), jests (*al-fukāhāt wa ʿl-mulaḥ*), wine, drinking together (*muʿāqara*), drinking companions, female singing slaves (*qiyān*), and the description of musical instruments (*ālāt al-ṭarab*)
    - 2.3.1. On praise, comprising thirteen divisions<sup>384</sup>

<sup>384</sup> Note that this chapter and the following one (2.3.2) are the only places in this Table of Contents where al-Nuwayrī provides a level of detail beyond the chapter (i.e. third-order) level. While such smaller divisions (*fuṣūl*) are found throughout the encyclopaedia – sometimes even

- 2.3.1.1. On the truth about praise (*ḥaqīqat al-madh*)
- 2.3.1.2. On what has been said about munificence (*jūd*) and generosity (*karam*) and stories of generous people
- 2.3.1.3. On what has been said about giving before being asked
- 2.3.1.4. On what has been said about bravery, forbearance (*ṣabr*), and daring (*iqdām*)
- 2.3.1.5. On what has been said about [possessing] an abundance of reason (*wufūr al-‘aql*)
- 2.3.1.6. On what has been said about honesty (*ṣidq*)
- 2.3.1.7. On what has been said about fidelity (*al-wafā’ wa ‘l-muḥāfaẓa*)
- 2.3.1.8. On what has been said about humbleness (*tawāḍu’*)
- 2.3.1.9. On what has been said about contentment with little (*qanā‘a*) and purity (*nazāha*)
- 2.3.1.10. On what has been said about thanks (*shukr*) and praise (*thanā’*)
- 2.3.1.11. On what has been said about the oath (*wa‘d*) and its fulfillment (*injāz*)
- 2.3.1.12. On what has been said about intercession (*shafā‘a*)
- 2.3.1.13. On what has been said about apology (*i‘tidhār*) and entreaty (*isti‘ṭāf*)
- 2.3.2. On invective, comprising fourteen divisions
  - 2.3.2.1. On what has been said about invective and who deserves it;
  - 2.3.2.2. On what has been said about envy (*ḥasad*)
  - 2.3.2.3. On what has been said about slander (*si‘āya*) and injustice (*baghy*)
  - 2.3.2.4. On what has been said about calumny (*ghība*) and defamation (*namīma*)
  - 2.3.2.5. On what has been said about avarice (*bukhl*) and meanness (*lu‘m*), and stories about misers and their justifications
  - 2.3.2.6. On what has been said about coming uninvited to dinner (*taṭafful*), and connected with this are the stories of the eaters and eating together (*al-‘akala wa ‘l-mu‘ākala*)
  - 2.3.2.7. On what has been said about cowardice (*jubn*) and flight (*firār*)
  - 2.3.2.8. On what has been said about stupidity (*ḥumq*) and ignorance (*jahl*)
  - 2.3.2.9. On what has been said about lying (*kadhib*)

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penetrating to the fifth-order level – al-Nuwayrī does not provide an exhaustive account of all the divisions in his work, as far as I have been able to determine.

- 2.3.2.10. On what has been said about betrayal (*al-ghadr wa 'l-khiyāna*)
- 2.3.2.11. On what has been said about arrogance (*kibr*) and pride (*'ujb*)
- 2.3.2.12. On what has been said about greed (*al-ḥirṣ wa 'l-ṭum'*)
- 2.3.2.13. On what has been said about promising and deferring (*al-wa'd wa 'l-maṭl*)
- 2.3.2.14. On what has been said about the inability to express oneself clearly (*al-'iyy wa 'l-ḥaṣar*)
- 2.3.3. On entertaining anecdotes and jests (*al-mujūn wa 'l-nawādir wa 'l-fukāhāt wa 'l-mulah*)
- 2.3.4. On wine and its prohibition, afflictions (*āfāt*), crimes (*jināyāt*), and names. And on the stories of those who abstained from it before the advent of Islam, and those among the nobles who were punished for consuming it, on those who were famous for drinking wine, and behaved dissolutely in public because of it. And on the good poetry declaimed about it, and the descriptions of its instruments and vessels, and what has been said about pursuing pleasure, and descriptions of the drinking soirées (*al-majālis*), and other things along these lines.
- 2.3.5. On boon companions (*nudmān*) and cup-bearers (*suqāt*)
- 2.3.6. On singing and listening to music, and what has been said about singing by way of censure (*ḥaẓr*) and permission (*ibāḥa*), and who listened to singing among the Companions, Successors, Imams, the pious worshippers, and ascetics. And on the caliphs who sang and their offspring. And on the nobles and leaders who sang (*al-ashrāf wa 'l-quwwād wa 'l-akābir*). And on the stories of those singers by whom singing was translated from Persian to Arabic.
- 2.3.7. On what the singer needs, and must know. And on what has been said about singing, and on the descriptions of female singing slaves, and on the descriptions of musical instruments.
- 2.4. On congratulations (*tahānī*), glad tidings (*bashā'ir*), elegies (*marāthī*), hired female mourners (*nawādib*), asceticism (*zuhd*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and prayers of invocations (*ad'iya*)
  - 2.4.1. On congratulations and glad tidings
  - 2.4.2. On elegies and hired female mourners
  - 2.4.3. On asceticism and trust in God
  - 2.4.4. On prayers of invocation
- 2.5. On the ruler (*malik*), what is required of him, and what he is in need of. And on that which is incumbent upon his subjects with respect to him, and vice versa. And related to this is the discussion of the advisors and the generals of the armies, and the descriptions of weapons, and the holders of religious positions (*wulāt al-manāṣib al-dīniyya*), and the scribes, and the eloquent ones (*bulaghā'*)
  - 2.5.1. On the conditions of the imamate, both legal (*shar'iyya*) and conventional (*'urfiyya*)

- 2.5.2. On the qualities of the ruler, his character (*akhlāq*), and the ways in which he is superior to others. And a recounting of what has been transmitted of the sayings of the caliphs and the rulers that demonstrate their superior stature and their noble character.
- 2.5.3. On what is owed to the ruler by the subjects in the way of obedience, faithful counsel (*naṣīḥa*), glorification, and reverence
- 2.5.4. On the commandments (*waṣāyā*) of rulers
- 2.5.5. On what is owed to the subjects by the ruler
- 2.5.6. On good statecraft (*ḥusn al-siyāsa*), and the management of the kingdom. And connected with this are [the subjects of] judiciousness (*ḥazm*) and determination (*‘azm*), seizing the opportunity (*intihāz al-furṣa*), self-mastery (*ḥilm*), forgiveness (*‘afw*), punishment (*‘uqūba*), and revenge (*intiqām*).
- 2.5.7. On consultation (*mashūra*), following opinions (*i‘māl al-ra’y*), despotism (*istibdād*), and [on the question of] whose opinion should be relied upon, and [which rulers] did not like asking for counsel.
- 2.5.8. On safeguarding secrets, granting audiences (*idhn*), and on chamberlains (*ḥujjāb*)
- 2.5.9. On the advisors (*wuzarā’*) and the ruler’s companions.
- 2.5.10. On the commanders of the armies, holy war (*jihād*), war stratagems (*makāyid al-ḥurūb*), descriptions of battles (*waqā’i’*), fortresses, and what was said in the description of weapons.
- 2.5.11. On judges and governors
- 2.5.12. On the court of grievances (*maẓālim*) this being a branch of the House of Justice (*dār al-‘adl*)
- 2.5.13. On supervision of moral behavior (*naẓar al-ḥisba*)
- 2.5.14. On the scribes and the eloquent ones; on secretaryship and its different branches of duties and writings, viz.: *kitābat al-inshā’*, *kitābat al-dīwān*, *al-taṣarruf*, *kitābat al-ḥukm*, *al-shurūt*, *kitābat al-naskh*, *kitābat al-ta’līm*.

### 3.0. **The Third Book, on the mute beasts** (*al-ḥayawān al-ṣāmit*)

- 3.1. On the carnivorous animals (*al-sibā’*) and those species related to them
  - 3.1.1. On the lion (*asad*), tiger (*babr*), and panther (*namir*)
  - 3.1.2. On the cheetah (*fahd*), dog (*kalb*), wolf (*dhi’b*), hyena (*ḍabu’*), and Egyptian mongoose (*nims*)
  - 3.1.3. On the grey squirrel (*sinjāb*), fox (*tha’lab*), bear (*dubb*), cat (*hirr*), and pig (*khinzīr*)
- 3.2. On the wild beasts (*wuḥūsh*), antelopes/gazelles (*ẓibā’*), and those species related to them
  - 3.2.1. On what has been said about the elephant, the rhinoceros (*karkaddan*), the giraffe (*zarāfa*), oryx (*mahāt*), and deer (*iyyal*)
  - 3.2.2. On what has been said about wild asses (*al-ḥumur al-waḥshiyya*), mountain goat (*wa’il*), and Saharan oryx (*lamṭ*)

- 3.2.3. On what has been said about the antelope (*ḡaby*), the hare (*arnab*), the monkey (*qird*), and the ostrich (*na'ām*)
- 3.3. [Untitled]
  - 3.3.1. On the horse (*khayl*)
  - 3.3.2. On mules and hinnies (*biḡhāl*) and donkeys (*ḡamīr*)
  - 3.3.3. On camels (*ibīl*), cattle (*baqar*), sheep and goats (*ḡhanam*)
- 3.4. [Untitled]
  - 3.4.1. On deadly venomous creatures (*dhawāt al-sumūm al-qawātil*)<sup>385</sup>
  - 3.4.2. On non-deadly venomous creatures<sup>386</sup>
- 3.5. On birds and fish, containing an additional chapter on what has been said about hunting implements for land and sea.
  - 3.5.1. On carnivorous raptors (*sibā' al-ṭayr*), and they are: eagles (*'iqbān*), goshawks (*bawāzī*), Saker falcons (*ṣuqūr*), and Peregrine falcons (*shawāhīn*)
  - 3.5.2. On the scavenger birds (*kilāb al-ṭayr*), and they are: the vulture (*nasr*), the Egyptian vulture (*rakham*), the kite (*ḡidā'a*), and the crow (*ḡhurāb*)
  - 3.5.3. On the herbivorous birds (*bahā'im al-ṭayr*), and they are: the Francolin (*durrāj*), the Bustard (*ḡubārā*), the peacock (*tāwūs*), the cock (*dīk*), the hen (*dajāj*), goose (*iwazz*), duck (*baṭṭ*), flamingo (*nuḡām*), ? (*anīs*), kingfisher (*qāwand*), the swallow (*khutṭāf*), jay (*qīq*), the starling (*zurzūr*), the quail (*summānā*), the hoopoe (*hudhud*), magpie (*'aq'aq*), and sparrows (*'aṣāfir*).
  - 3.5.4. On the common birds (*bughāth al-ṭayr*), and they are: the turtle-dove (*qumrī*), the palm-dove (*dubṣī*), the ring-dove (*warashān*), collared doves (*fawākhī*), turtle-dove (*shifnīn*), ? (*'abaṭbaṭ*), ? (*nawwāḡ*), sandgrouse (*qaṭāt*), the stock dove (*yamām*) and its kinds, and the parrot (*babbaghā'*)
  - 3.5.5. On the nocturnal birds (*ṭayr al-laylī*), and they are: the bat (*khuffāsh*), the [mythical bird] Karawān (*karawān*), the owl (*būm*), screech-owl (*ṣadā*)
  - 3.5.6. On the winged insects (*ḡamaḡ*), and they are: ants (*naml*), the hornet (*zunbūr*), the spider (*'ankabūt*), locusts (*jarād*), silk worms (*dūd al-qazz*), the fly (*dhubāb*), gnats (*ba'ūd*), mosquitoes (*barāḡhīth*), ? (*ḡurqūṣ*).
  - 3.5.7. On the kinds of fish, including the dophin (*dulfīn*), electric ray (*ra'ād*), crocodile (*timsāḡ*), skink (*saqanqūr*), tortoise (*sulaḡfāḡ*), turtle (*laja'a*), hippopotamus (*al-faras al-nahrī*), sable (*sammūr*),

<sup>385</sup> This chapter includes sub-chapters on snakes (*ḡayyāt*), particularly vipers (*afā'ī*), and scorpions (*'aqārib*).

<sup>386</sup> This chapter includes sub-chapters on: dung beetles (*khanāfis*), the gecko (*wazaḡh*), the thorn-tail lizard (*ḡabb*), the weasel (*ibn 'irs*), the chameleon (*ḡirbā'*), hedgehogs (*qanāfidh*), mouse-like rodents (*fī'rān*), ticks (*qurād*), ants (*naml*), small ants (*dharr*), lice (*qaml*), and nits (*ṣu'āb*).

beaver (*qundus*), ermine (*qāqum*), frogs (*ḍafādi*), crab (*saraṭān*), and some marvels of the sea.

- 3.5.8. On the descriptions of implements of hunting on land and at sea, and the description of crossbows (*rumāt al-bunduq*)

- 4.0. **The Fourth Book, on plants** on different kinds of scents (*ṭīb*), perfumery (*bakhūrāt*), *Galia moscata* (*ghawālī*) perfumes made of aloe with various admixtures (*nudūd*), distillates (*mustaqṭarāt*), and other things.
- 4.1. On the origin of plants, and what different soils are suited to producing. And related to this is the discussion of vegetables and foodstuffs (*al-aqwāt wa 'l-khuḍrawāt, wa 'l-buqūlāt*)
- 4.1.1. On the origin (*aṣl*) of plants, and its arrangement (*tartībīhi*)
- 4.1.2. On what different kinds of soil are suited to producing, and on what uproots a plant root
- 4.1.3. On foodstuffs and vegetables<sup>387</sup>
- 4.2. On trees (*ashjār*)
- 4.2.1. On those whose fruit has an inedible peel<sup>388</sup>
- 4.2.2. On those whose fruit has an inedible stone<sup>389</sup>
- 4.2.3. On those whose fruit has neither peel nor stone<sup>390</sup>
- 4.3. On aromatic flowers (*fawākih*)
- 4.3.1. On aromatics that can be distilled (*yustaṭṭar*). And these include four kinds: the rose (*ward*), the wild rose (*nīsrīn*), the white willow (*khilāf*), and the water lily (*nīlūfar*).

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<sup>387</sup> This chapter contains the following sub-chapters: wheat (*ḥinṭa*), barley (*sha'īr*), chickpea (*ḥimmaṣ*), a kind of bean (*bāqillā*), rice (*uruzz*), poppy (*khashkhāsh*), flax (*kattān*), hempseed (*shahdānīj*), melon (*biṭṭīkh*), cucumber (*qiththā', khiyār*), gourd/pumpkin (*qar'*), eggplant (*bādhinjān*), chard (*silq*), cauliflower (*qunnabīt*), cabbage (*kurunb*), rape/turnip (*saljam*), radish (*fujl*), carrot (*jazar*), onion (*baṣal*), garlic (*thūm*), leek (*kurrāth*), chard (*rībās*), asparagus (*halyūn*), endive/wild chicory (*hindibā*), mint (*nu'ni'*), watercress (*jirjīr*), rue (*sadhāb*), tarragon (*ṭarkhūn*), spinach (*isfānākh*), purslane (*al-baqla 'l-ḥamqā'*), sorrel (*ḥummāḍ*), fennel (*rāziyānāj*), and celery (*karafs*).

<sup>388</sup> This chapter contains the following sub-chapters: almond (*lawz*), walnut (*jawz*), hazelnut (*jillawz*), pistachio (*fustuq*), chestnut (*shāh ballūt*), pine (*ṣanawbar*), pomegranate (*rummān*), banana (*mawz*), bitter orange (*nāranj*), lemon (*laymūn*).

<sup>389</sup> This chapter contains the following sub-chapters: the date palm (*nakhīl*) and those trees that resemble it such as the coconut palm (*nārjīl*), the areca palm (*fawfal*), the pandanus palm (*kādhi*), and Doum palm (*khazam*); the olive tree (*zaytūn*); carob (*khurnūb*); plum (*ijjās*); wild cherry (*qarāsiyā*); azarole (*zu'rūr*); peach (*khawkh*); apricot (*mishmash*); jujube (*'unnāb*); lote tree fruit (*nabīq*).

<sup>390</sup> This chapter contains the following sub-chapters: grapes (*'inab*), figs (*tīn*), mulberry (*tūt*), apple (*tuffāh*), quince (*safarjal*), pear (*kummathrā*), mandrake (*luffāh*), lemon (*utruj*).



- 4.3.2. On aromatics that cannot be distilled. And these include violets (*banafsqj*), narcissus (*narjis*) jasmine (*yāsmīn*), myrtle (*al-ās*), saffron (*za'farān*), mint (*ḥabaq*)
- 4.4. On gardens (*riyād*) and flowers (*azhār*). And connected with this are the gum resins (*ṣumūgh*), and the *amnān* and *'aṣā'ir* [including things like wax, honey, sugar, wormwood, etc.]
  - 4.4.1. On gardens, and how they have been described in poetry and prose
  - 4.4.2. On flowers, and how they have been described<sup>391</sup>
  - 4.4.3. On gum resins, containing twenty-eight types<sup>392</sup>
  - 4.4.4. On mannas and secretions (*amnān*)<sup>393</sup>
- 4.5. On the forms of aromatics (*ṭīb*), perfumery (*bakhūrāt*), *Galia moscata* (*ghawālī*), perfumes made of aloe with various admixtures (*nudūd*), distillates (*mustaqṭarāt*), oils (*adhān*), certain perfumes (*naḍūḥāt*), sexual medicines (*adwiyat al-bāh*), and the sympathetic properties (*khawāṣṣ*)
  - 4.5.1. On musk and its varieties
  - 4.5.2. On ambergris (*'anbar*), its varieties, and its sources (*ma'ādin*)
  - 4.5.3. On wood (*'ūd*), its types and sources
  - 4.5.4. On sandal wood (*ṣandal*), its types and sources
  - 4.5.5. On spikenard (*sunbul hindī*) and its types; and on the clove (*qaranful*), and its essence (*jawhar*)
  - 4.5.6. On costus (*quṣṭ*) and its types
  - 4.5.7. On the production of *Galia moscata* (*ghawālī*) and aloe-based admixtures (*nudūd*).
  - 4.5.8. On the production of *rāmīk* and *sukk* (early Arab compound perfumes made of pounded gallnuts).
  - 4.5.9. On the production of certain perfumes (*naḍūḥāt*), and on distilled water (*al-miyāh al-mustaqṭara*) and un-distilled.

<sup>391</sup> This chapter contains the following sub-chapters: gillyflower (*khīrī* and *manthūr*); iris/lily (*sawsan*); marigold (*ādharyūn*); lavender (*khurram*); poppy (*shaqīq*); chamomile (*bahār*); chrysanthemum (*uqḥuwān*).

<sup>392</sup> These twenty-eight types are the following: camphor (*kāfūr*); yellow amber (*kahrabā*); pistachio resin (*'ilk al-anbāt*); mastic (*'ilk al-rūm*, a.k.a. *al-muṣṭakā* pistacia lentiscus); terebinth resin (*'ilk al-butm*); carob resin (*ṣamgh al-yanbūt*); cochium (*ṣamgh al-qūfī*); tragacanth (*kathīrā*); frankincense (*kundur*); euphorbium (*farbayūn*); aloe (*ṣabr*); myrrh (*murr*); terebinth (*kamkām*); balsamodendron playfairii (*dijāj*); ferula asafoetida (*ushshiq*); artichoke gum (*turāb al-qay'*); galbanum (*qinna*); devil's dung (*hiltīt*); sarcocolla (*anzarūt*); sagapenum (*sakabīnāj*); chestnut resin? (*sādawrān*); dragon's blood (*damm al-akhawayn*); storax (*may'a*); ? (*ṣamgh qab'arayn*); ? (*al-muql al-azraq*); gum Arabic (*al-ṣamgh al-'arabī*); ? (*qaṭīrān*); pine resin (*zift*).

<sup>393</sup> These include: honey (*'asal*); wax (*sham'*); lac wax (*lukk*); kermes (*qirmiz*); labdanum (*lāadhan*); dodder (*aftīmūn*); kamala (*qinbīl*); Yemeni yellow dye (*wars*); manna (*taranjubīn*); siracost (*shīrkhošk*); manna (*mann*); dodder or wormwood (*kashūth*); and sugar of *asclepias gigantea* (*sukkar al-'ushar*).

- 4.5.10. On the medicines that promote sex (*al-adwiya allatī tazīdu fī 'l-bāh*) and make it pleasurable (*tuladhdhidhu 'l-jimā'*), and what is related to that.
- 4.5.11. On what is to be done with sympathetic qualities (*fīmā yuf'al bi-l-khāṣṣiyya*)

## 5.0. The Fifth Book, on history

- 5.1. From Adam and Eve up to the People of the Ditch (*aṣḥāb al-rass*)
  - 5.1.1. Adam, Moses
  - 5.1.2. Seth and his children
  - 5.1.3. Idrīs
  - 5.1.4. Noah
  - 5.1.5. Hūd
  - 5.1.6. Ṣāliḥ
  - 5.1.7. Aṣḥāb al-bi'r
  - 5.1.8. Aṣḥāb al-rass
- 5.2. Ibrāhīm and others
  - 5.2.1. Ibrāhīm, Numrūd
  - 5.2.2. Lūṭ
  - 5.2.3. Ishāq
  - 5.2.4. Yūsuf
  - 5.2.5. Ayyūb
  - 5.2.6. Dhū l-Kifl
  - 5.2.7. Shu'ayb
- 5.3. Mūsā and others
  - 5.3.1. Mūsā, Hārūn, Banū Isrā'īl, Qārūn, Bal'am, al-Jabbārīn
  - 5.3.2. Yūsha' b. al-Nūn, Ḥizqīl, Ilyās, al-Yasa', 'Ilā, Ashmuwīl, Ṭālūt, Jālūt, Dāwud, Sulaymān
  - 5.3.3. Sha'yā, Armiyā, Bukhta Naṣṣara, etc.
  - 5.3.4. Dhū 'l-Nūn
  - 5.3.5. Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, 'Imrān, Maryam, 'Isā
  - 5.3.6. On the dialogue between those sent by Jesus and what happened to them after he was raised up to heaven, and the story of Jirjīs
  - 5.3.7. On the events that took place before Jesus appeared. [This chapter and the rest of this *qism* is a *dhayl*]
  - 5.3.8. On Jesus's appearance on earth; Gog and Magog, death of Jesus, etc.
  - 5.3.9. On what came after Jesus's death
  - 5.3.10. On the stories of the Day of Resurrection, etc.
- 5.4. On the Mulūk al-Aṣqā', the Mulūk al-Umam, the Ṭawā'if, the dam-flood (*sayl al-'arim*), and the battles of the pre-Islamic Arabs.
  - 5.4.1. On Dhū 'l-Qarnayn
  - 5.4.2. On the Mulūk al-Aṣqā'
  - 5.4.3. On the Mulūk al-Umam [includes Sasanians and Byzantines, etc.]
  - 5.4.4. On the Mulūk al-'Arab, and the dam-flood

- 5.4.5. On the battle-days of the Arabs
- 5.5. On the Islamic religion (*al-milla al-islāmiyya*), etc.
  - 5.5.1. On the Prophet's *sīra*
  - 5.5.2. On the stories of the caliphs after him, including 'Alī and his son al-Ḥasan
  - 5.5.3. On the Umayyad state in Syria
  - 5.5.4. On the 'Abbāsīd state in Iraq and Egypt
  - 5.5.5. On the Umayyad state in al-Andalus, and on al-Andalus after the fall of the Umayyad state
  - 5.5.6. On Ifrīqiyya and the Maghrib, etc.
  - 5.5.7. On those who contested for power between the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd states
  - 5.5.8. On the Zanj, the Qarāmiṭa, and the Khawārij in Mosul.
  - 5.5.9. On those who became independent in the eastern and northern lands during the 'Abbāsīd period, i.e.: the kings of Khurāsān, Transoxania, al-Jibāl, Ṭabarastān, Ghazna, al-Ghawr, al-Sind, al-Hind...
  - 5.5.10. On the rulers of Iraq and Mosul and the Jazīra, and Syria, ec.
  - 5.5.11. On the Khwārazmid state, and the Chingizid state, and those that split off from it.
  - 5.5.12. On the rulers of Egypt during the 'Abbāsīd period (all the way up to Nuwayrī's lifetime.)

## Appendix B: Guide to *Nihāya* Editions & Chapter Word Counts

Al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāya* is available in two complete editions. The standard Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (DKM) edition was begun by Aḥmad Zakī Pāsha in Cairo in 1923 and only completed in 1997. A new edition was published in 2004 by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya in Beirut. The latter press is often accused of producing derivative editions of uneven quality, but in the present case the scholarly apparatus seems fairly independent of the Egyptian edition. The Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya (DKI) version is also printed in a cleaner and more legible typeface, but most importantly, it is (as of the current moment) widely available and affordable, whereas the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya edition went out of print long ago and is difficult to find outside of certain research libraries. Unless it is re-issued, future researchers may have to depend increasingly on the Beirut edition.

To this end, I have assembled below a table of contents for the two editions so as to simplify the task of locating material in one edition based on references to the other. I have also included the word counts for each chapter, and aggregate word counts for the work's five Books (*funūn*). The chapter titles are drastically abbreviated; please see Appendix A for the full titles.

**Table 17: Editions & Word Counts**

§	Book/Chapter	DKM	DKI	words
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Book I: Heaven &amp; Earth</b>	<b>1:27</b>	<b>1:19</b>	<b>66,150</b>
1.1.1	Creation of heavens	1:28	1:21	237
1.1.2	Configuration of heavens	1:30	1:22	1,011
1.1.3	Angels	1:36	1:29	302
1.1.4	Planets	1:38	1:30	4,025
1.1.5	Fixed stars	1:63	1:56	984
1.2.1	Clouds, snow, hail	1:71	1:65	2,517
1.2.2	Shooting stars, thunder, lightning	1:87	1:81	1,325
1.2.3	Wind	1:95	1:89	1,139
1.2.4	Fire	1:103	1:96	4,323
1.3.1	Nights & days	1:130	1:122	4,126
1.3.2	Months & years	1:156	1:147	2,188
1.3.3	Seasons	1:169	1:158	2,488
1.3.4	Festivals and holidays	1:184	1:174	2,871
1.4.1	Creation of the Earth	1:198	1:187	252
1.4.2	Names of the Earth	1:199	1:188	928
1.4.3	Size of the Earth	1:207	1:195	434
1.4.4	Seven climes	1:209	1:197	1,278

**Table 17 (cont.): Editions & Word Counts**

<b>§</b>	<b>Book/Chapter</b>	<b>DKM</b>	<b>DKI</b>	<b>words</b>
1.4.5	Mountains	1:218	1:206	1,522
1.4.6	Seas and islands	1:228	1:216	5,410
1.4.7	Rivers, streams, springs	1:261	1:243	5,128
1.5.1	Characteristics of different peoples	1:292	1:272	871
1.5.2	Attributes of different lands	1:297	1:276	14,532
1.5.3	Ancient buildings	1:372	1:345	5,443
1.5.4	Descriptions of fortresses	1:401	1:370	987
1.5.5	Descriptions of palaces and dwellings	1:406	1:376	1,829
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Book II: The Human Being</b>	<b>2:1</b>	<b>2:9</b>	<b>487,648</b>
2.1.1	Etymology, naming, stages, and nature of the human being	2:5	2:9	1,940
2.1.2	Literary descriptions of body parts	2:16	2:20	15,154
2.1.3	Amorous poetry, desire, love, and passion	2:125	2:139	28,526
2.1.4	Genealogy	2:276	2:295	19,263
2.2.1	Proverbs	3:1	3:3	18,330
2.2.2	Superstitions of the pre-Islamic Arabs	3:116	3:112	2,443
2.2.3	Stories of the soothsayers, omens and ornithomancy, physiognomy, and induction	3:128	3:122	5,508
2.2.4	Euphemisms and metonymies, and allusions	3:152	3:144	2,471
2.2.5	Enigmas and riddles	3:162	3:153	1,826
2.3.1	Praise poetry	3:173	3:163	18,275
2.3.2	Invective	3:265	3:248	24,812
2.3.3	Entertaining anecdotes and jests	4:1	4:3	16,756
2.3.4	Wine	4:102	4:74	9,263
2.3.5	Boon companions and cup bearers	4:126	4:127	1,077
2.3.6	Music and singing	4:160	4:134	72,545
2.3.7	On the singer	5:117	5:113	1,397
2.4.1	Congratulations and glad tidings	5:127	5:123	9,190

**Table 17 (cont.): Editions & Word Counts**

<b>§</b>	<b>Book/Chapter</b>	<b>DKM</b>	<b>DKI</b>	<b>words</b>
2.4.2	Elegies and hired female mourners	5:164	5:160	13,198
2.4.3	Asceticism and trust in God	5:230	5:228	13,666
2.4.4	Prayers of invocation	5:284	5:273	13,549
2.5.1	Legal and conventional conditions of rulership	6:1	6:3	956
2.5.2	Qualities of the ruler	6:5	6:7	660
2.5.3	What is owed to the ruler	6:9	6:11	1,691
2.5.4	Commandments of rulers	6:16	6:17	3,975
2.5.5	What is owed to the subjects by the ruler	6:33	6:31	2,133
2.5.6	Good statecraft	6:43	6:40	5,424
2.5.7	Consultation	6:69	6:64	2,192
2.5.8	The chamberlain	6:81	6:76	2,036
2.5.9	Advisors and companions of the ruler	6:92	6:87	11,629
2.5.10	War, weapons, soldiers	6:151	6:130	18,369
2.5.11	Judges and governors	6:248	6:211	3,857
2.5.12	Court of grievances	6:265	6:224	5,317
2.5.13	Supervision of moral behavior	6:291	6:242	5,355
2.5.14	Scribes and secretaryship	7:1	7:2	134,865
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Book III: Animals</b>	<b>9:224</b>	<b>9:139</b>	<b>74,228</b>
3.1.1	Lion, tiger, panther	9:226	9:141	2,200
3.1.2	Cheetah, dog, wolf, hyena, Egyptian mongoose	9:248	9:151	3,360
3.1.3	Grey squirrel, fox, bear, cat, and pig	9:278	9:170	3,176
3.2.1	Elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, oryx, deer	9:302	9:184	3,513
3.2.2	Wild ass, mountain goat, Saharan oryx	9:326	9:199	688
3.2.3	Gazelle, hare, monkey, ostrich	9:332	9:203	1,531
3.3.1	Horse	9:343	9:210	18,358
3.3.2	Mule and donkey	10:79	10:48	3,385
3.3.3	Camels, cattle, livestock	10:103	10:63	4,092
3.4.1	Deadly venomous creatures	10:133	10:79	2,801

Table 17 (cont.): Editions &amp; Word Counts

§	Book/Chapter	DKM	DKI	words
3.4.2	Non-deadly venomous creatures	10:152	10:91	4,514
3.5.1	Carnivorous birds: eagle, goshawk, Saker falcon, Peregrine falcon	10:181	10:109	3,623
3.5.2	Scavenger birds: vulture, Egyptian vulture, kite, crow	10:206	10:124	1,230
3.5.3	Herbivorous birds: francolin, bustard, peacock, cock, hen, goose, duck, flamingo, <i>anīs</i> , kingfisher, swallow, jay, starling, quail, hoopoe, magpie, sparrow.	10:214	10:129	6,576
3.5.4	Common birds: turtle dove, palm dove, ring dove, collared dove, <i>shifnīn</i> , <i>‘abaṭbaṭ</i> , <i>nawwāḥ</i> , <i>qaṭāt</i> , stock dove, parrot	10:258	10:156	3,832
3.5.5	Nocturnal birds: bat, Karawān, owl, screech-owl	10:283	10:172	609
3.5.6	Winged insects: ant, hornet, spider, locust, silk work, fly, gnat, mosquito, <i>ḥurqūṣ</i>	10:287	10:174	3,177
3.5.7	Fish	10:312	10:186	2,678
3.5.8	Hunting instruments	10:324	10:196	4,885
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Book IV: Plants</b>	<b>11:1</b>	<b>11:3</b>	<b>64,083</b>
4.1.1	Origin of plants	11:4	11:7	429
4.1.2	Soils	11:7	11:9	1,235
4.1.3	Foodstuffs and vegetables	11:11	11:13	8,491
4.2.1	Trees whose fruit has an inedible peel	11:86	11:58	3,638
4.2.2	Trees whose fruit has an inedible stone	11:117	11:79	3,395
4.2.3	Trees whose fruit has no peel or stone	11:146	11:97	4,689
4.3.1	Aromatics that can be distilled: rose, wild rose, white willow, water lily	11:184	11:122	5,037
4.3.2	Aromatics that cannot be distilled: violet, jasmine, myrtle, saffron, mint	11:226	11:147	3,420
4.4.1	Gardens	11:256	11:168	1,827
4.4.2	Flowers	11:271	11:181	2,192
4.4.3	Gum resins	11:291	11:195	3,783

Table 17 (cont.) Editions &amp; Word Counts

§	Book/Chapter	DKM	DKI	words
4.4.4	Mannas	11:325	11:210	770
4.5.1	Musk and its varieties	12:1	12:3	1,528
4.5.2	Ambergriis	12:16	12:10	746
4.5.3	Aromatic wood	12:23	12:14	1,898
4.5.4	Sandal wood	12:39	12:21	399
4.5.5	Spikenard and clove	12:43	12:24	710
4.5.6	Costus	12:49	12:27	294
4.5.7	Galia moscata and aloe-based admixtures	12:52	12:29	2,356
4.5.8	Compound perfumes	12:70	12:40	5,971
4.5.9	Perfumes and essences	12:120	12:69	2,927
4.5.10	Medicines that promote sexual pleasure	12:142	12:84	6,569
4.5.11	Sympathetic qualities	12:217	12:129	1,779
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Book V: History</b>	<b>13:1</b>	<b>13:3</b>	<b>1,633,935</b>
5.1.1	Ādam, Mūsa	13:10	13:13	5,836
5.1.2	Seth and his children	13:35	13:35	545
5.1.3	Idrīs	13:38	13:37	1,077
5.1.4	Nūḥ	13:42	13:41	2,264
5.1.5	Hūd	13:51	13:48	4,602
5.1.6	Ṣāliḥ	13:71	13:65	3,355
5.1.7	Aṣḥāb al-bi'r	13:86	13:77	478
5.1.8	Aṣḥāb al-rass	13:88	13:79	1,805
5.2.1	Ibrāhīm, Numrūd	13:96	13:86	6,158
5.2.2	Lūṭ	13:123	13:108	1,054
5.2.3	Ishāq	13:128	13:112	435
5.2.4	Yūsuf	13:130	13:114	5,804
5.2.5	Ayyūb	13:157	13:135	1,730
5.2.6	Dhū 'l-Kifl	13:164	13:141	770
5.2.7	Shu'ayb	13:167	13:144	1,377
5.3.1	Mūsā, Hārūn, Banū Isrā'īl, Qārūn, Bal'am, al-Jabbārīn	13:173	13:150	23,716



**Table 17 (cont.): Editions & Word Counts**

§	Book/Chapter	DKM	DKI	words
5.3.2	Yūsha‘ b. al-Nūn, Hizqīl, Ilyās, al-Yasa‘, Īlā, Ashmuwīl, Ṭālūt, Jālūt, Dāwud, Sulaymān	14:1	14:3	31,299
5.3.3	Sha‘yā, Armiyā, Bukhta Naṣṣara, etc.	14:142	14:112	7,033
5.3.4	Dhū ‘l-Nūn	14:171	14:134	6,274
5.3.5	Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, ‘Imrān, Maryam, Īsā	14:195	14:152	12,822
5.3.6	On the dialogue between those sent by Jesus and what happened to them after he was raised up to heaven, and the story of Jirjīs	14:250	14:194	5,270
5.3.7	On the events that took place before Jesus appeared. <sup>394</sup>	14:271	14:211	1,395
5.3.8	Jesus, Gog and Magog	14:277	14:216	1,841
5.3.9	Jesus’s death	14:285	14:224	674
5.3.10	Day of Resurrection	14:288	14:225	1,775
5.4.1	Dhū ‘l-Qarnayn	14:298	14:233	5,338
5.4.2	The Mulūk al-Aṣqā‘	14:319	14:249	36,781
5.4.3	The Mulūk al-Umam	15:142	15:112	32,278
5.4.4	The Mulūk al-‘Arab, and the dam-flood	15:291	15:226	9,571
5.4.5	The battle-days of the Arabs	15:338	15:259	18,645
5.5.1	The Prophet’s <i>sīra</i>	16:2	16:4	258,953
5.5.2	The stories of the caliphs after him, including ‘Alī and his son al-Ḥasan	19:7	19:3	127,369
5.5.3	The Umayyad state in Syria	20:239	20:147	144,218
5.5.4	The ‘Abbāsīd state in Iraq and Egypt	22:9	22:3	136,413
5.5.5	The Umayyad state in al-Andalus, and al-Andalus after the fall of the Umayyad state	23:334	23:195	24,106
5.5.6	Ifriqiyya and the Maghrib, etc.	24:5	24:3	61,035
5.5.7	Those who contested for power between the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd states	24:401	24:213	23,322

<sup>394</sup> Note that this chapter and the subsequent three chapters technically constitute an addendum (*dhayl*) to §5.3.

**Table 17 (cont.): Editions & Word Counts**

§	Book/Chapter	DKM	DKI	words
5.5.8	The Zanj, the Qarāmiṭa, and the Khawārij in Mosul.	25:104	25:59	46,961
5.5.9	Those who became independent in the eastern and northern lands during the ‘Abbāsīd period	25:331	25:200	30,804
5.5.10	Rulers of Iraq and Mosul and the Jazīra, and Syria	26:123	26:69	79,856
5.5.11	The Khwārazmid state, and the Chingizid state, and those that split off from it.	27:197	27:137	37,834
5.5.12	The rulers of Egypt up to the present time	28:11	28:1	431,062

### **Appendix C: Notes on Autographs and Some Later Manuscripts**

This appendix contains several images from autographs and later manuscripts of the *Nihāya*, and some images from a copy of al-Bukhārī's *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* in al-Nuwayrī's hand. Notes on the manuscripts precede the images. I am grateful to Prof. Adam Gacek for his assistance in analyzing these manuscripts, and to Dr. Arnoud Vrolijk of Leiden University Library for allowing me to photograph several manuscripts during a visit in October 2009 and to publish them here. I am also grateful to the staff of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul. All images are used with permission.

#### **Summary of findings:**

The autographs of the *Nihāya* held by Leiden University Library appear to belong to two different sets made by the author. One of these sets (which includes MSS Or. 2i and Or. 2l) has many features in common with several of the autographs held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF 1573-76, 1578-79). The other set is represented by MSS Or. 2f and Or. 2d, the latter of which is not considered an autograph by the Leiden cataloguers, but which I believe bears a strong resemblance to Or. 2d (see below).

All of the autographs are remarkably clean and have very few corrections or additions, even for fair copies. They contain codicological features such as extensive and consistent rubrication, running headers, and shifting margins that would have enabled a consultative mode of reading, however the manuscripts are not so remarkable in that respect; other manuscripts of compilatory texts from the same period exhibited similar properties, and many later manuscripts of the *Nihāya* do not look like they were copied with special attention to consultative features. The last manuscript considered is a copy of al-Bukhārī's *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* which looks to be either copied by al-Nuwayrī himself, or else is a copy based on an exemplar produced by him. The ductus is considerably different from that of the *Nihāya* autographs, but al-Nuwayrī's name is at the end of each audition statement. The final image contains details from the *Nihāya* colophons, and the introduction to the Bukhārī manuscript.

**Table 18: Manuscripts Consulted**

MS #	Notes
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2a	<b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b> 576 pp., dated 807 AH. Covers §1.1.1 – §2.4.4. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i> , 252; CCA I, 14 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i> , 13. <sup>395</sup>
	This manuscript was copied only 75 years after al-Nuwayrī's death and the text of the title page reads: <i>al-Mujallad al-awwal min tārikh al-Nuwayrī / al-musammā Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i> ('The first volume of al-Nuwayrī's chronicle / which is called <i>Nihāyat al-arab...</i> ') The table of contents is in one text block, with rubrication for the titles of sections and chapters. In the main text, rubrication is used for chapter titles, citations ( <i>wa-qāla fulān</i> , etc.), poetry markers, and sub-chapters ( <i>wa-mimmā wuṣifat bihi 'alā ṭariq al-dhamm</i> , etc.) This single volume includes material from the first five volumes of al-Nuwayrī's original copy, which perhaps means that certain chapters have been left out. There are notices throughout the manuscript that mark out the original volume numbers ( <i>tajzi'at al-muṣannif</i> ). Al-Nuwayrī is referred to as a compiler ( <i>muṣannif</i> ). The manuscript was copied by one 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. [name scratched out] al-Ḥalabī al-Shāfiī.
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2b	<b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b> 359 pp., undated. Covers §2.2.1 - §2.3.2. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i> , 252; CCA I, 14 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i> , 13.
	This is the third volume of this set, according to a statement on the flyleaf. Smaller format, approx. 24cm x 17cm. Seventeen lines per page. Rubrication within the text block along with larger <i>naskhī</i> script for headers. This section contains proverbs ( <i>amthāl</i> ) organized alphabetically, and each sub-chapter is marked out with large red titles (e.g. <i>ḥarf al-tā'</i> ).

<sup>395</sup> The abbreviations used in this table refer to the following works: Petrus Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1980); M. J. De Goeje and M. Th. Houtsma, *Catalogus Codicum Arabicorum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* (Leiden: Lugduni Batavorum, Brill, 1888-1907); J. J. Wiktam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2007).

**Table 18 (cont.): Manuscripts consulted**

MS #	Notes
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2c	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  200ff., undated. Covers §5.1.1 – §5.4.2a. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i>, 252; CCA I, 14 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i>, 13.</p> <p>This is one of several later manuscripts that use a different volume numbering system than al-Nuwayrī did. The title page says that this is volume six (<i>al-juz' al-sādis</i>), which corresponds to volumes 11 and 12 of the original text. Halfway through the volume, there is a statement in a different hand that reads, “here ends the 11<sup>th</sup> volume of the book <i>Nihāyat al-arab</i>... and it is followed by the 12<sup>th</sup> volume of that chronicle.” The manuscript contains an interesting consultative feature in the form of bookmarks sewn into the fore-edge margin of certain pages to mark the beginning of a new section (<i>qism</i>) or chapter (<i>bāb</i>). The section markings are in blue thread, sewn in the shape of a triangle and the chapter markings are in black thread, sewn into one hole (see figure 17, below).</p>
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2d	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  254 ff., dated 972 AH. Covers §5.4.2b – §5.5.1a. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i>, 252; CCA I, 14 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i>, 13.</p> <p>This manuscript includes volumes 13 and 14 of the <i>Nihāya</i>, in two different hands. The hand in volume 14 is extremely similar to MS Or. 2f (see below), which suggests that it is an autograph. See figures 20 and 21 below. The copyist of the first volume is likely the same individual as the copyist of the first volume of MS Or. 2f, and both manuscripts are dated 972 AH. (See also Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2g, which is also dated 972 AH and likely belongs to the same set).</p>
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2f	<p><b>Nuwayrī / <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  235 ff., autograph. Covers §5.5.1b (on the life of the Prophet). 25 lines per page. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i>, 252; CCA I, 15 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i>, 14.</p> <p>This volume contains volumes 15 and 16 of the <i>Nihāya</i>, and they are in two different hands. The first volume ends on f. 114a, and the colophon gives a copy date of Monday 3 Muḥarram, 972 AH. The colophon of the next volume states: “Here ends the 16<sup>th</sup> volume of the book <i>Nihāyat al-arab</i>... in the hand of its author Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Dā’im al-Bakrī al-Taymī, known as al-Nuwayrī (<i>kamula al-juz' al-sādis ‘ashara min Kitāb Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab ‘alā yad mu’allifihi faqīr raḥmat rabbihi Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Dā’im [Dāyīm] al-Bakrī al-Taymī al-ma’rūf bi-l-Nuwayrī</i>).” The first juz’ has rubrication for chapter</p>

**Table 18 (cont.): Manuscripts Consulted**

MS #	Notes
	headings, citations, poetry (three red dots, commas after each hemistich), Qur'ān, ḥadīth. Gatherings are quinions. The rubrication disappears in the autograph portion, replaced by larger black chapter-headings, change of script, etc. See figure 28 below for the colophon of the autograph portion.
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2i	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  206 ff, autograph. Covers §5.5.9 - §5.5.11. See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i>, 253; CCA I, 16 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i>, 14.</p>
	<p>This manuscript contains volumes 24 and 25. It would appear to belong to a different set than the autographs Or. 2d and 2f, as it is in a larger format. There are twenty-seven lines per page, the script is larger and rather different, and the paper is considerably stiffer. Gatherings are quinions. The copyist is identified as the work's author in the colophon (<i>kamula al-juz' 'alā yad mu'allifihi faqīr raḥmat rabbihi...</i>) See figures 18 and 28 below.</p>
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 2l	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  427 pp., autograph. Covers part of §5.5.12 (the enormous final <i>bāb</i> of the work). See Voorhoeve, <i>Handlist</i>, 253; CCA I, 16 (no. 5); Wiktam, <i>Inventory</i>, 14.</p>
	<p>This is in the same hand as Or. 2i. It has the same style of bright red rubrication, large sub-chapter titles. Twenty-six lines per page. Someone else has added the words <i>min Tārīkh al-Nuwayrī</i> after the title, so this is how it seems to have been identified by later readers. See figure 19 below.</p>
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 19b	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  143 ff., presumed autograph, approx. 27 x 18.5 cm. Covers end of §5:5:12 (the years from 721-730). 19 lines per page. See Witkam, <i>Inventory</i>, 26.</p>
	<p>This manuscript is in a very different hand from the other autographs. The attribution to al-Nuwayrī is not in a colophon, but rather in a different hand on the flyleaves (<i>tārīkh Nuwayrī</i> [sic] <i>bi-khatt al-muṣannif</i>). In my view, this is unlikely to be an autograph, unless one assumes that al-Nuwayrī's handwriting changed considerably in the last year or so of his life (when he would have been compiling this final volume of the <i>Nihāya</i>). There is some evidence that this could have been the case: al-Udfuwī writes that he was afflicted with "pain in the ends of his fingers, which was the cause of his death."</p>

**Table 18 (cont.): Manuscripts consulted**

MS #	Notes
Leiden Univ. MS Or. 273	<p><b>al-Nuwayrī, <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i></b>  1145 pp. Undated, but part of the original Warner collection so the <i>terminus ad quem</i> is 1665 CE (around 1073 AH). Covers §1.1.1 – §5.4.3a. Approx. 42.5 x 23 cm. See Witkam, <i>Inventory</i>, 111.</p> <p>This is a very fine large-format copy of the <i>Nihāya</i>, perhaps produced for a wealthy patron. It seems to be the first volume of a two-volume set of this work. There is a table of contents at pp. 1-2, with gold ornamentation and other colors (see figure 22 below). The main text contains interesting panel work in the early pages, which organizes the text block into gold-bordered columns for the poetry, with rubricated script in the right hand margin stating the authors of the poetic citations (see figure 23 below). The paper is smooth (with a polished sheen) and quite thin. There are catchwords. On a single page that contains one solid text block with no columns for poetry, there are 45 lines and about 22 words per line. This yields a maximum word count of around 1000 words per page. Gold border switches to red on p. 36. Two-column poetry switches to four-column on p. 127.</p>
Fazl Ahmed Paşa MS 362	<p><b>al-Bukhārī, <i>al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ</i></b>  316 ff. Dated 725 AH. Copied by al-Nuwayrī.</p> <p>The first sixteen folios contain a detailed table of contents (<i>fihrist</i>) that is very likely to be a later addition. The contents are organized in a tabular format, with five columns of twenty-three rows on each page (see figure 24). Each cell has a short title for the <i>ḥadīth</i> in question and its chapter (<i>bāb</i>) number. The foliation (also surely a later addition) restarts in the main portion of the work, on the folio following the title page.</p> <p>The title page (figure 25) lays out the chain of transmission (<i>riwāya</i>) of this copy of al-Bukhārī’s <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i>. The final two lines list al-Nuwayrī’s immediate sources: Abū ‘l-Ḥusayn al-Yūnīnī (the famous redactor of al-Bukhārī’s text), Abū ‘l-Abbās Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār al-Ṣāliḥī, and Sitt al-Wuzarā’ Umm Muḥammad Wazīra bt. ‘Umar b. As‘ad b. al-Munajjā al-Tanūkhī. The latter two were al-Nuwayrī’s principal teachers of <i>ḥadīth</i>.</p> <p>The introduction to the work (folio 18b, figure 26) begins by stating the date, place, and sources of al-Nuwayrī’s transmission: Aḥmad al-Ḥajjār and Wazīra bt. ‘Umar b. As‘ad al-Munajjā, in the Maṣūriyya madrasa in Cairo in Jumādā I, 715 AH (August, 1315 CE), and then repeats the chain of transmission between them and al-Bukhārī as presented on the title page, adding the year of transmission for each link in the chain. Abbreviations in the margins refer to variations represented by different transmitters of the <i>ḥadīths</i>.</p>

Table 18 (cont.): Manuscripts consulted

MS #	Notes
Fazl Ahmed Paşa MS 362 (cont.)	<p><b>al-Bukhārī, <i>al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> (cont.)</b></p> <p>The final pages of the manuscript (beginning with folio 314b, figure 27) contain a list of reading and auditing statements (<i>balaghāt</i>) copied from the model that this manuscript is based on. The introduction to this section (beginning at the top of folio 314b) signals a shift to al-Nuwayrī’s voice (<i>yaqūlu afqar khalq Allāh ta‘ālā ilā raḥmatihī Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Dāyim al-Bakrī al-Taymī al-Qurashī al-ma‘rūf bi-‘l-Nuwayrī ‘afā Allāh ‘anhu wa luṭifa bihi...</i>), followed by a statement describing the manuscript he relied upon to copy this text and his method of collation. The model (<i>aṣl</i>) is in the hand of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Majīd b. Abī ‘l-Faḍl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd, who copied it from a manuscript in the hand of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Alī b. Surūr al-Maqdisī, which was held (<i>mawqūf</i>) by the Ḍiyā’iyya madrasa at the foot of Jabal Qāsiyūn. This manuscript was in six volumes and was audited by (<i>masmū‘a ‘alā</i>) Sirāj al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. al-Zabīdī. Al-Nuwayrī then says that the person who attended to the collation and editing of his own model was al-Yūnīnī himself (<i>i‘tanā bi-muqābalat hādha ‘l-aṣl alladhī naqaltu minhu wa qābaltu bihi wa-taḥrīrihi wa-ḍabṭihi wa-itqānihi al-shaykh al-imām al-‘allāma Sharaf al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Ḥusayn ‘Alī b. al-shaykh al-imām Taqī al-Dīn Abī ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Yūnīnī abānahu Allāh al-jann ḥatta ṣāra [...?...] yunlaja’ ilayhi wa-aṣlan yu‘tamad ‘alayhi...</i>) He concludes by saying that he will copy all of the audition statements found in the model without abridgment.</p>





Figure 18: Leiden University, MS Or. 2i, ff. 151b-152a

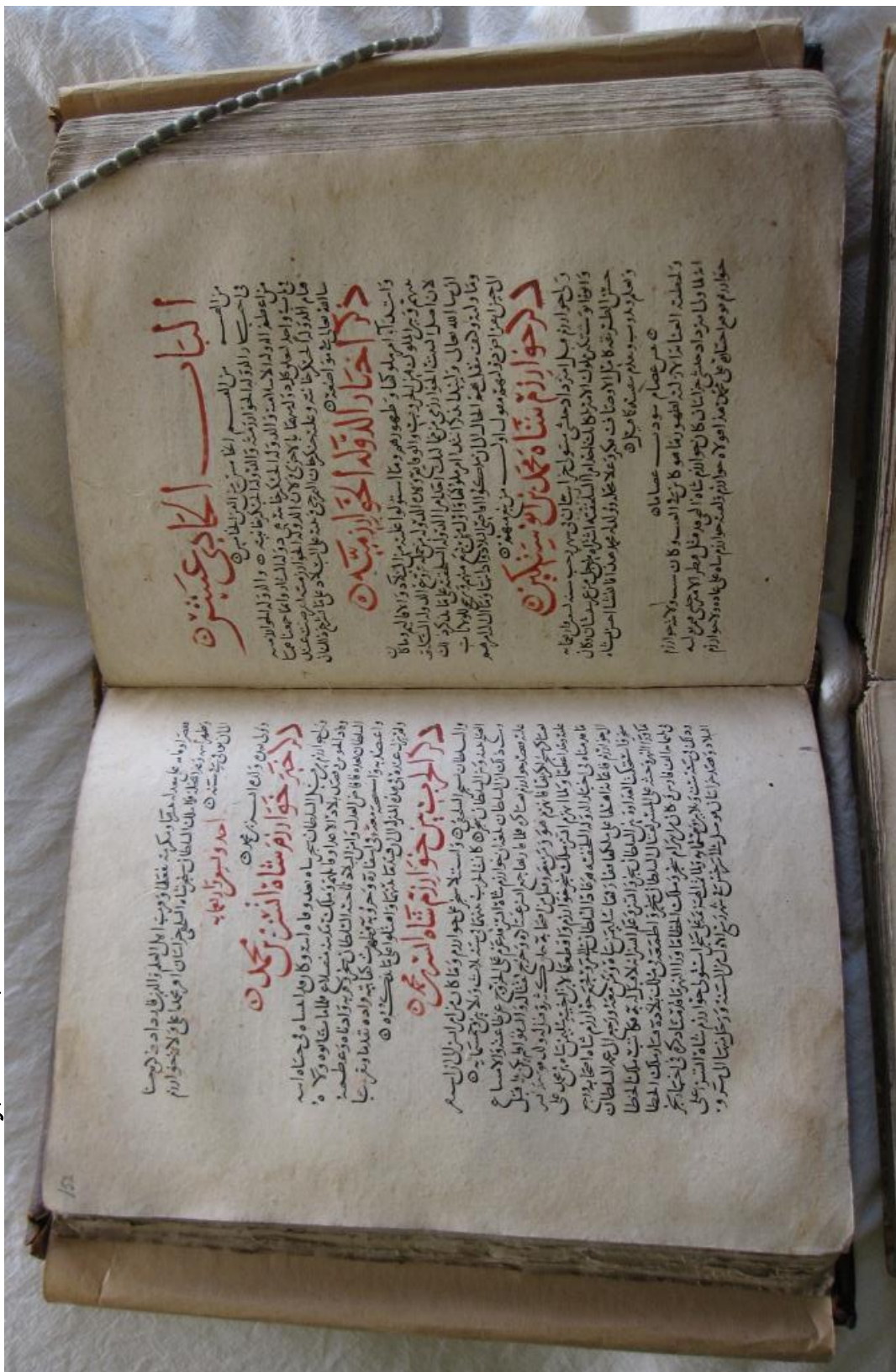
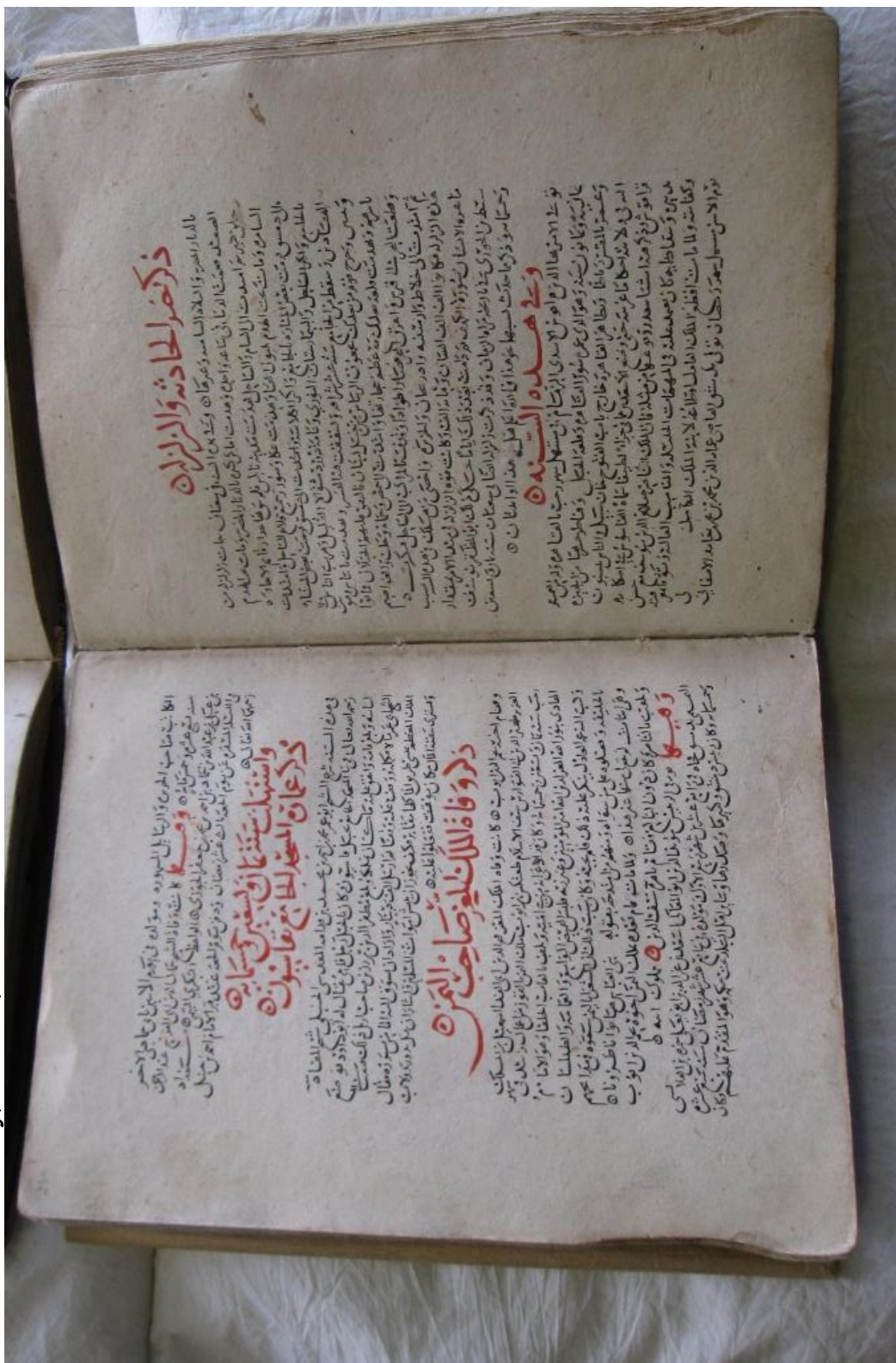




Figure 19: Leiden University, MS Or. 21, ff 229b-230a



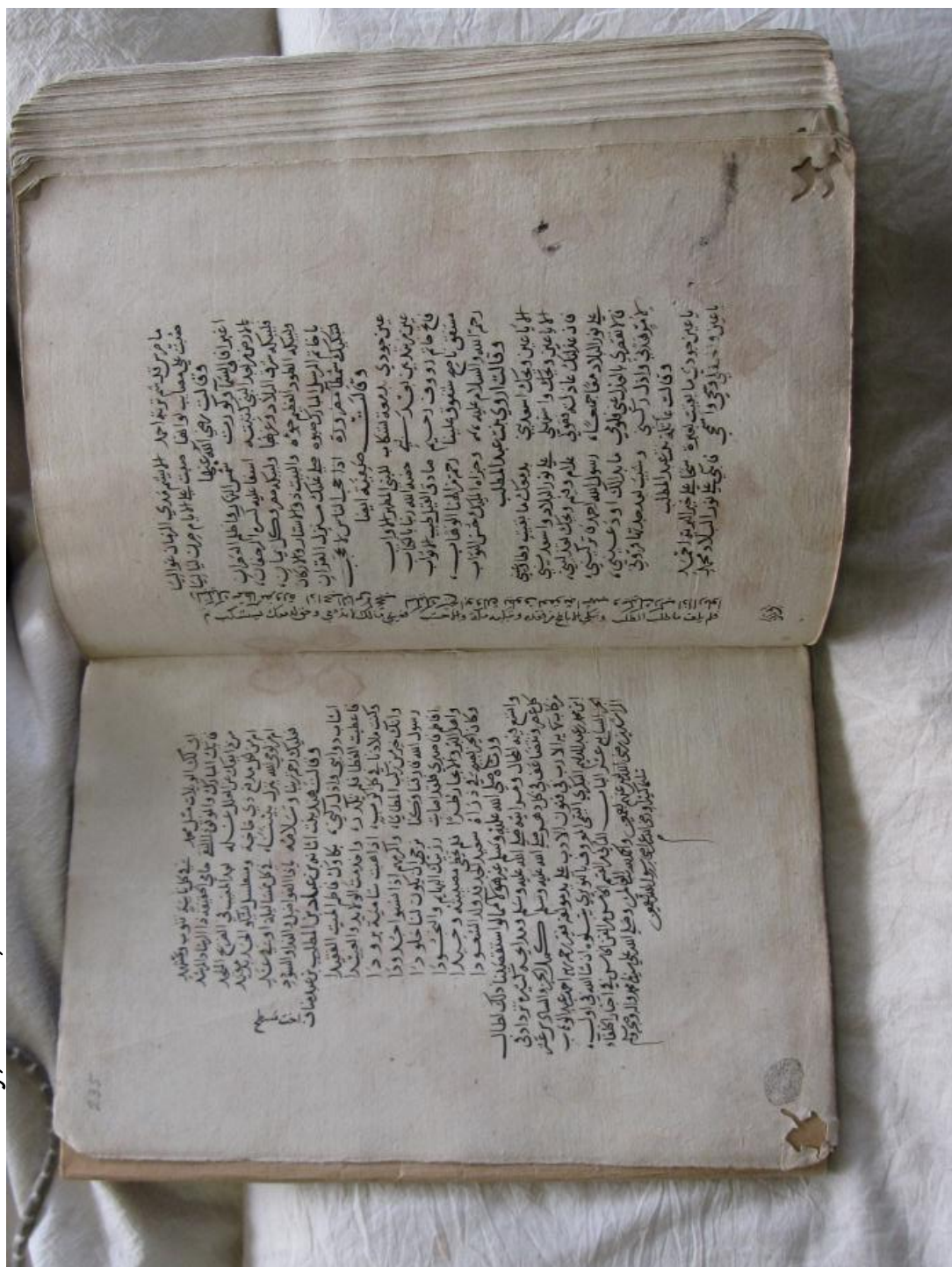




Figure 21: Leiden University, MS Or. 2d, ff. 157b-158a

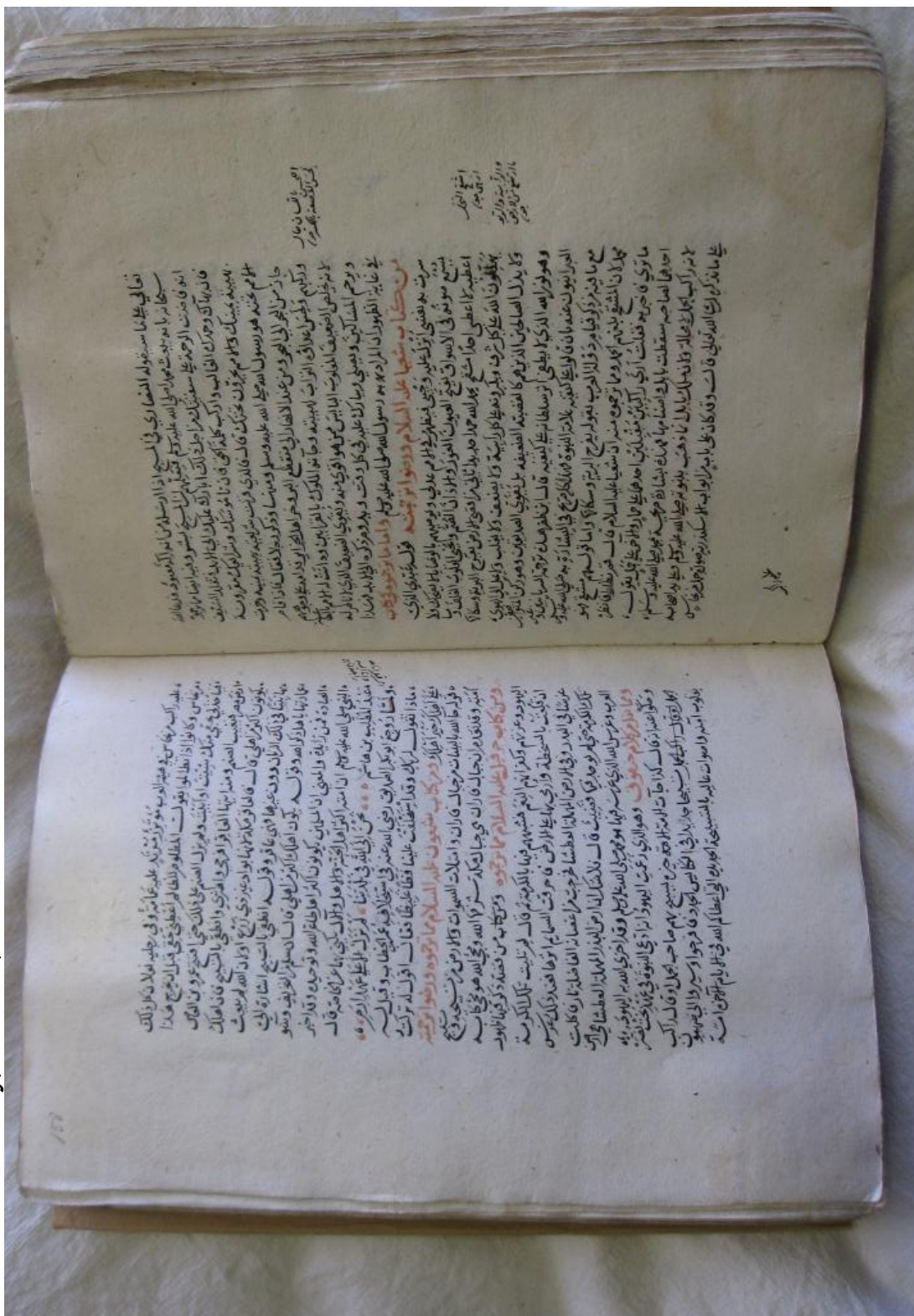


Figure 22: Leiden University, MS Or. 273, pp. 1-2





Figure 23: Leiden University, MS Or. 273, pp. 127-28

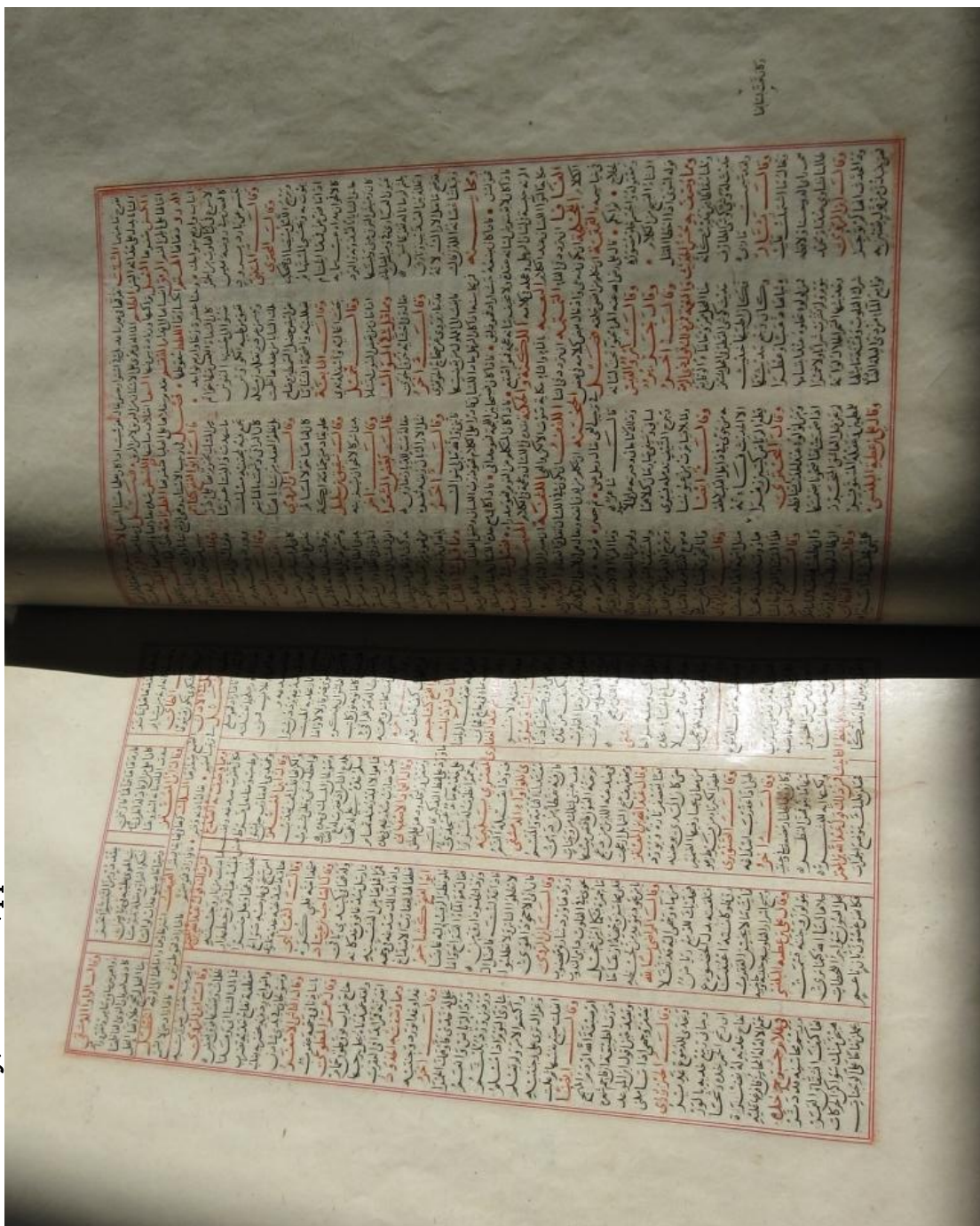








Figure 25: Fazıl Ahmed Paşa MS 362, ff. 16b-17a (title page)

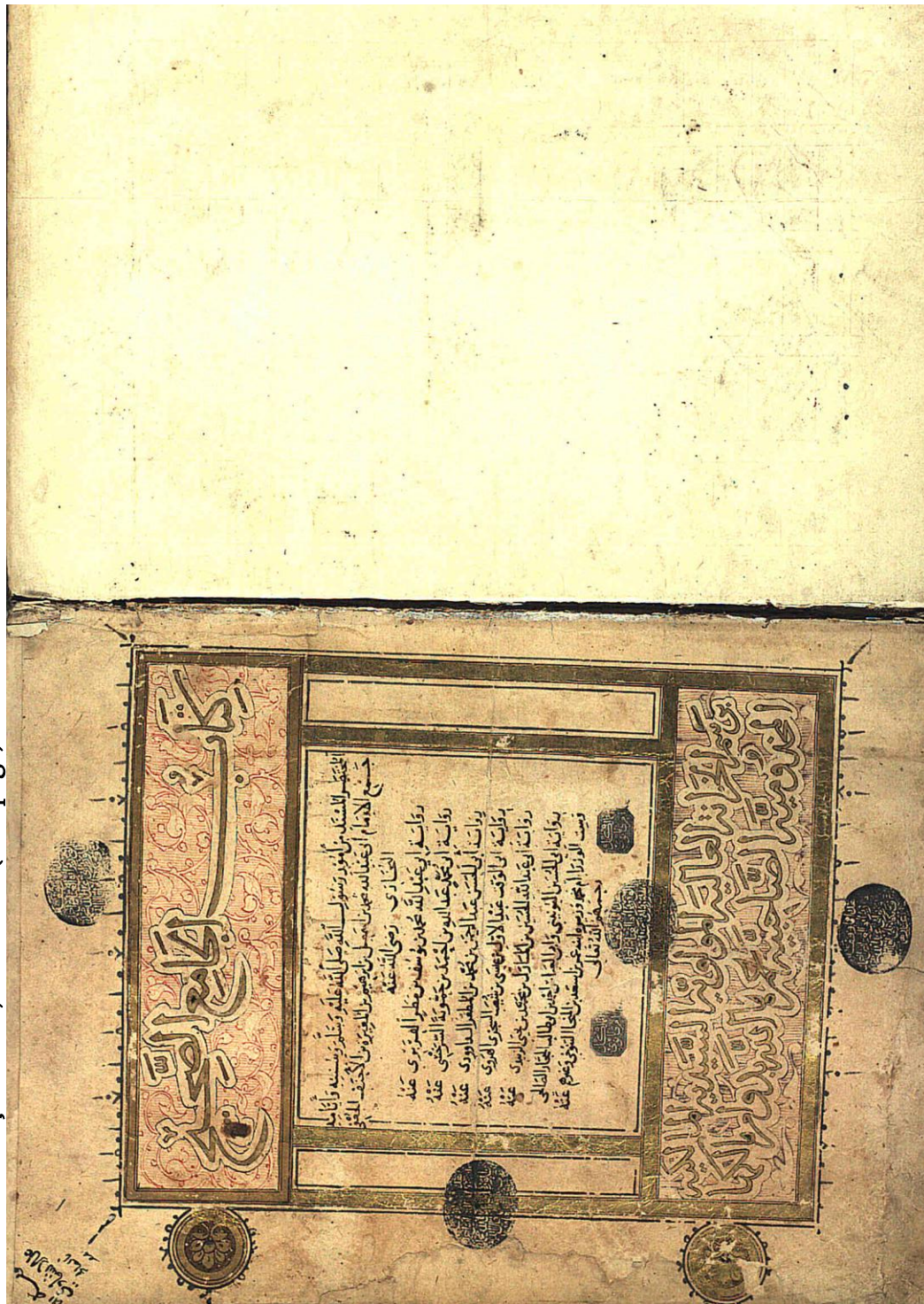




Figure 26: Fazıl Ahmed Paşa MS 362, ff. 18b-19a (introduction)

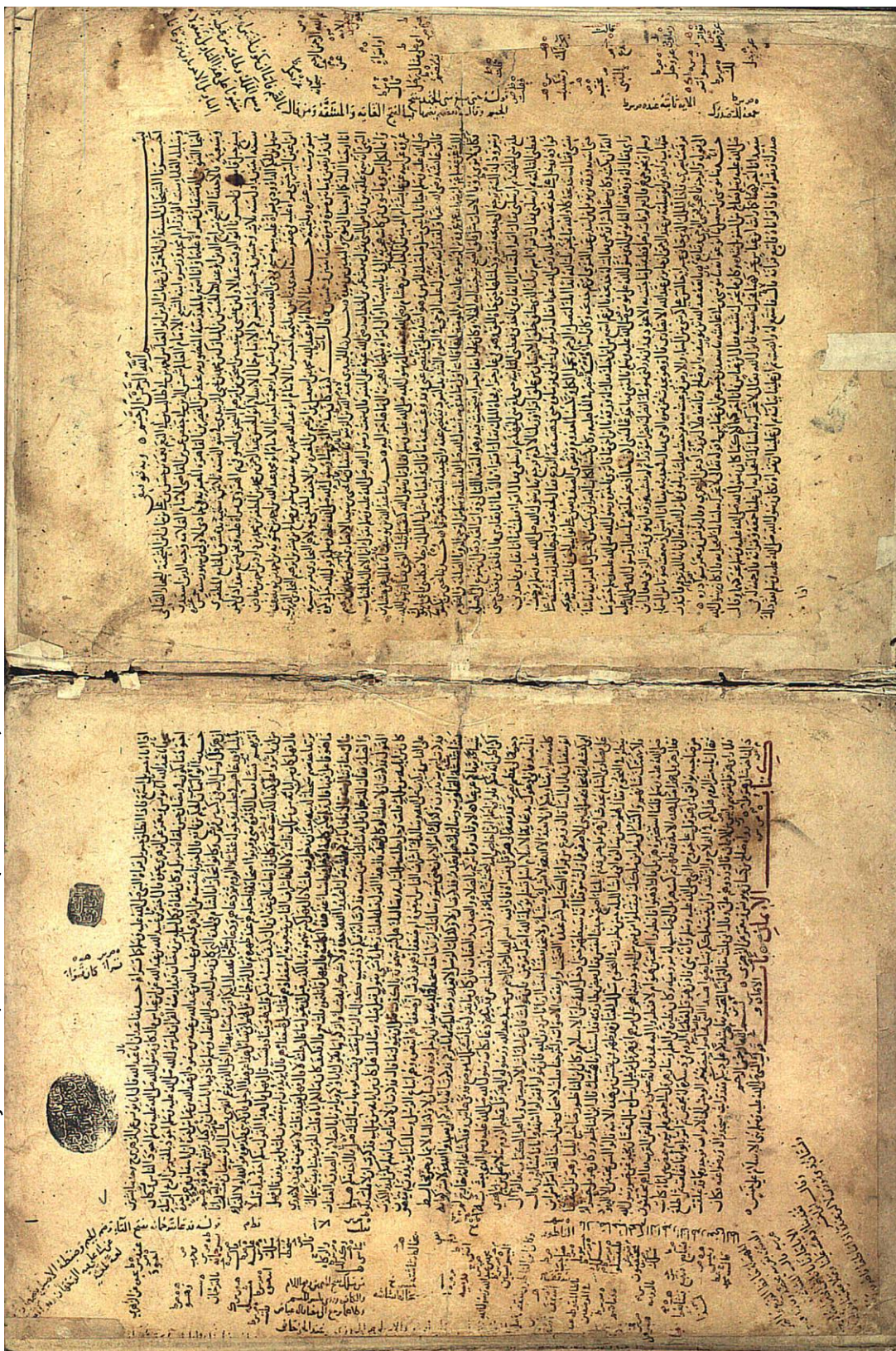
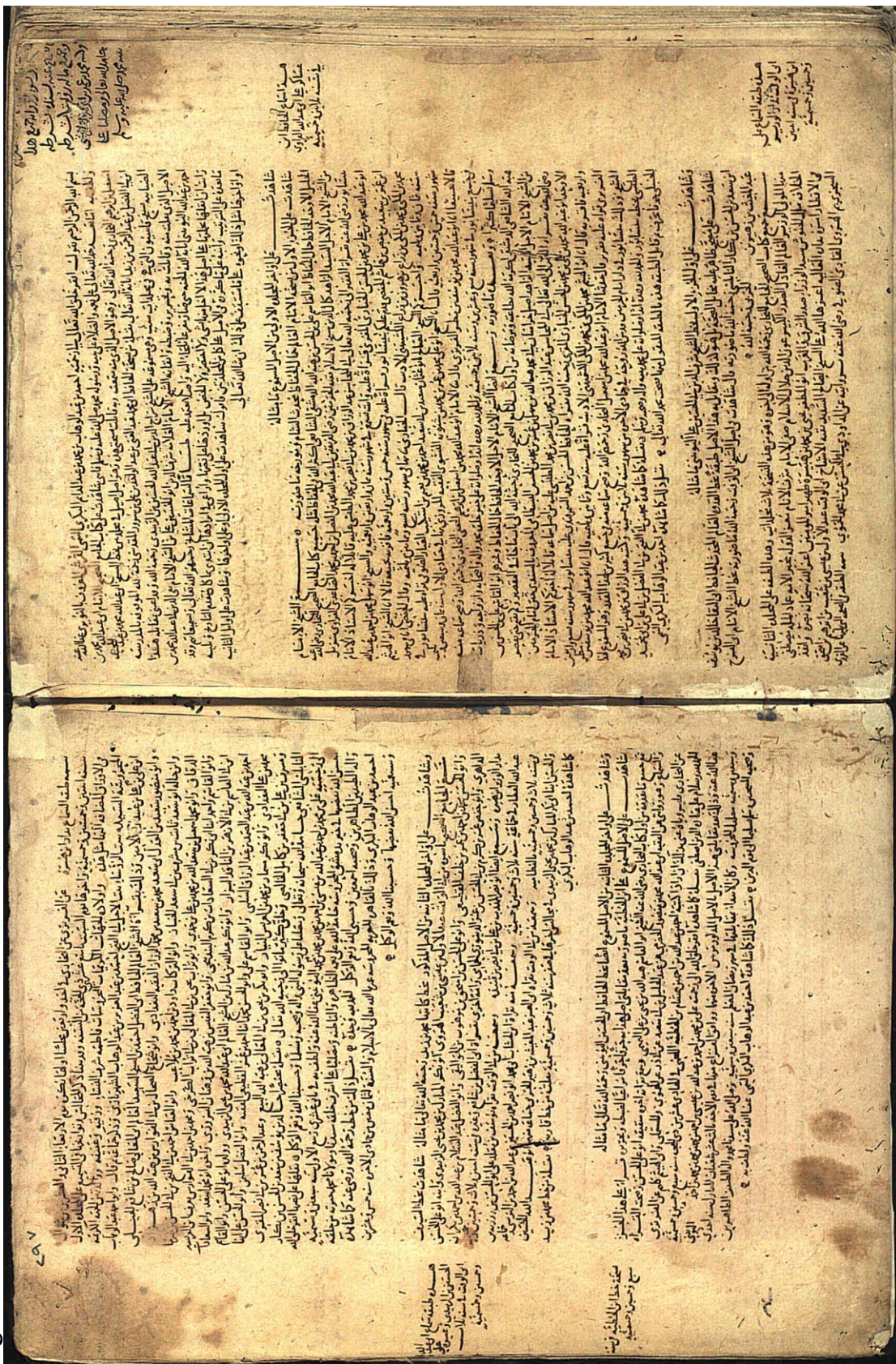




Figure 27: Fazil Ahmed Pasa 362, ff. 314b-315a (audition statements)





**Figure 28: Detail from three manuscripts in al-Nuwayrī's hand**

Colophon of Leiden Or. 2f (undated autograph)

ورثه صلى الله عليه وسلم غير هؤلاء كما لو استقصينا ذلك لطال  
 واستغ فيه الحال ومراثة صلى الله عليه وسلم ومداحه كثيرة ترد في  
 كل عمر وتتضاعف في كل دهر صلى الله عليه وسلم كما ذكره السائر في  
 مرآة ٢٠٤٠ في فنون الادب على يد مولف فقير رحمه الله احمد عبد الوهاب  
 ابن محمد عبد السلام البكري البتي المعروف بالتوزيري صلوه الله في اوله  
 ابراهيم السابع عشر الباب الثاني من القسم الثاني من الفن الثاني في احوال الخلفاء  
 الراشدين رضي الله عنهم ليعرفوا والحمد لله العالمن وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم  
 تلمذ كذا رضي الله عنهما رسول الله محمد

Colophon of Leiden Or. 2i (undated autograph)

كمل الجز على يد مؤلفه فقير رحمه الله  
 يتلوه لن شأ الله تعالى في أول الجز  
 اثنا عشر من الهنتم الخامس من العن الخامس في أخبار  
 ملوك الديار المصرية  
 مات المؤلف سنة ثلاث  
 وثلاثين وسبعمائة  
 والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله وسلم على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم

Bukhari Manuscript copied by Nuwayri

بإحسانه أحمد بن عبد الوهاب بن محمد بن عبد الدائم البكري الشبلي القرشي المعروف بالنووي عن الله عنه  
 إلى بيده ورسوله محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فإني شاهدت على كتاب الجامع الصحيح للإمام أبي عبد الله محمد بن  
 الذي منه سمعت ربه قالت سمعتي هذا وهو أصل أصيل 2 مجلس من خط الشيخ أبي عبد الله محمد بن عبد الحميد  
 بن سحنة الحافظ أبي محمد عبد الغني بن عبد الوالد بن علي بن سرور المقدسي رَحِمَهُ اللهُ الموقوفه بالمدرسته  
 بمسوقه على الشيخ سراج الدين أبي عبد الله الحسين بن الزبيدي رَحِمَهُ اللهُ وقد اعني بتأليفه هذا  
 وإبقائه الشيخ الإمام العلامة شرف الدين أبو الحسن علي بن الشيخ الإمام أبي الدين لأبي عبد الله محمد بن

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